Abridgment of the Compendium of Ologies and Aphorisms

Mukhtasar Jami' Al Uloom Wal Hikam

Imam Ibn Rajab Al Hanbali



Abridged and commentary by

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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Introduction
By Shaikh and Hadith Expert
Abdul-Aziz At-Turaifi

Praise is to Allah, Lord of all beings. For He guided us to His way and enlightened our hearts with its proofs and its signs. It is He – Exalted and Great – Who we ask for steadfastness upon that to which He has guided us. And [we ask] that He complete His great favor upon us by causing what He has given us (guidance) to continue by His generosity and favor. As to our subject:

The Divine Communication is distinct from all customary and known language in that the ratio of words to meaning is lower than any other form of language. This is what the Prophet referred to as (جوامع الكلم), the meaning of which is what was just mentioned: few words which bring together many meanings of the words which came before them. This was narrated from *Sahl* in the collection of Al-Bukhari.

The experts, those who are in agreement with them, and even those who oppose them, are all in agreement that normal human efforts are unable to bring this level of quality. It [the Divine Communication] includes that which rectifies both current conditions and our final destination. And this applies to both the Qur'an and the Sunnah (authenticated narrations of the statements and deeds of the Prophet) equally – as both of them are of the Divine Communication from Allah to His final Prophet (and thereby to mankind). Allah said: {And he speaks nothing from his own inclinations. It is none other than a message communicated.} Qur'an: An-Najm: 3-4

Among the [many narrations which make up the] Sunnah, there are certain *hadith* to which the scholars have devoted special attention and care, collecting them, writing about them, explaining them and giving commentary on them. These hadith are examples of the eloquence and density of meaning characteristic of Allah's communication to mankind. In just a few sentences there is so much meaning that, if it were to be thoroughly explained along with all the meaning that cascades from these few words, their eloquence, power, brevity and clarity, all pens would dry up before this could be completed.

This is one of the unique characteristics of the nation of Muhammad. In these brief texts are found massive amounts of knowledge and benefit.(1) Allah said: {And, whoever is given wisdom has been given an immense good.} Qur'an: Al-Baqarah: 269. So, whoever is given wisdom and [understanding of] the Qur'an has been given what was never given to any other, even to one who collected all knowledge from the entire history of mankind from every other [human] source such as manuscripts, scrolls and the like. Allah said: {And you have not been given knowledge except a little.} Al-Qur'an: Al-Israa': 85. A small number of words from the Sunnah of Muhammad contains a huge amount of knowledge.

Among the most famous books which collected this type of narrations is: "The Forty Regarding the Structure of Islam and the Foundation of its Rulings" by the Imam Yahya ibn Sharaf An-Nawawi. This book of his is the keystone of this field. Many great imams and students of knowledge have devoted their effort to this book, memorizing it and understanding it. The origin of this book is a previous book entitled: "The Fundamental Narrations" by Al-Hafidh Abi 'Amr ibn Salah. In it, he collected twenty-six narrations. An-Nawawi added to these until there was a total of forty-two narrations.

The scholars have devoted great efforts to this book. There have been more books and commentaries written about it than any other book of such

(1) TN: No other religion on earth retains such a vast collection of the actual words of the original Messenger verbatim and in the actual language of that Messenger.

humble size. In fact such works number over 100 books. And the best of these works in value, the one with the greatest understanding, which has had the greatest impact and is the most inclusive of the knowledge of both narration and understanding is the book: "The Collected Knowledge and Wisdom" by Al-Hafidh and Critical Thinker Abi Al-Farj Abdur-Rahman ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali. Anyone who knows this author will not be surprised by the content of this book. Things are defined by their source and when they are of the same quality, there is no surprise. He brings together the sciences of narration and of understanding. He was master of criticism and finding flaws (in chains of narration), as well as knowing the reliability or lack thereof of the narrators. No one comes near him in his knowledge of the fine points of flaws in narrations among any who came after him – as far as I know. He had vast knowledge of the statements of the best generations. He knew about their lineage, where they lived and the specialties of each of them. He was following in the footsteps of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, walking on the same path. His book: "The Collected Knowledge and Wisdom" is the most trustworthy witness to that. So, who is that who could approach him or even come near?

Most students of knowledge have benefitted from this book. Even though it is rather large (four volumes), there is no single spot in it without beneficial knowledge to be gained. Unfortunately, many average people or beginning students have been unable to get its full benefit because of the comprehensiveness of the author's analysis. So not everyone who looks into it is able to benefit from everything in it. As for the educated and sophisticated, wherever he may wander in this book he will find benefit and knowledge.

A distinct characteristic of this book is the great length to which the author goes regarding the meaning of each word in the Prophetic narrations. He cites evidence for all of that from the Qur'an, other hadith and statements from the early generations. At the same time, giving a powerful and detailed analysis of the chain of narration and any possible flaws in it, fine shades of linguistic meanings and juristic principles, all of which shed light on the meanings contained in the narration. All of this clearly shows the author's firm footing, strengths, and vast background knowledge in all of the relevant sciences.

Such a comprehensive book is in need of a simplified and abridged version to make it more accessible to beginning students of knowledge and to the general public. At the same time, it can serve as "notes" to the scholars already familiar with the deeper elements of analysis – all in a manner which does not detract from the author's original intent. Not everyone can do such things well. Abridged versions of works vary widely in quality just as original works do. Actually, creating a good abridged version of a great work by someone who is not expert and knowledgeable in that is often more challenging and difficult than writing an original work. The point of an abridged version is not just to reduce the number of letters and words. Rather, the one doing the abridgement must delete only what does not destroy meaning. And, he should not leave lengthy passages where sufficient understanding could be had from half of it. That which goes beyond conveying the fundamental meaning is additional detail and not all people have the same need for that level of detail or explanation. If too much of this is left in, the abridgement fails in its goals of making the meanings accessible to more people and expressing things more simply. Rather, it becomes burdensome, jumbles meanings together, actually making them more difficult to understand, and ultimately wastes the reader's time – time which would have more beneficial spent reading the unabridged original work. Abridged works of this nature amount to wasting of time for no benefit. More than one of the great scholars have commented that the reason for the decline in knowledge is the lack of skills among the scholars due to their excessive reliance on abridged versions, which actually lessens understanding. They compete in retaining brief texts which have little to offer. They waste their lives in closed solutions (answers) and only very general understanding. They neglect the books of the earlier generations, never opening the commentaries and the original great books which go into great detail and present clear meanings and evidence. These books give those who spend their time with them skills, understanding and the ability to think critically in less time. And no one truly knows this for certain except for those who have tried it and experienced it.

It is incumbent on one producing an abridgement to select words and what goes with them. Words are not better or worse as single words. Rather, distinction or the lack thereof, comes from the appropriateness of a word's meaning to what comes after it. Unfortunately, many writers who have produced abridged versions of classical or modern works, did not truly know how to express the content or what to bring in and what to leave out. They failed to understand that language has lineage like the lineage of people. So, while it may be legitimate to ascribe a grandson to his grandfather, doing so when the father is present represents a flaw. Many of them failed to distinguish between something being "lawful" and it being less than the best.

Rather, too many are simply obsessed with reducing the number of pages and lines, rather than delivering the complete meaning of the original. He is like one who tosses pebbles but counts walnuts because of his obsession with being mentioned among those who have produced abridged works. He desires to be among the recognized authors. Whoever is in this state is overtaken by a drive for competition and outdoing others. If you examine many of these abridged works, you will find some of the authors highly critical of others. For this reason, many of those from the earlier generations stayed away from abridged works because they distract from taking knowledge for its sources and deriving it from its original place. This is because the art of abridging is only mastered by the very few - those who look with their hearts, seek the aid of their intellects, use their vision and their reason along with sound analysis. And then, they exert their maximum effort in all of that. Even so, this is no easy matter. Rather, it is a very difficult goal to attain.

It is customary for elders to advise imbibing [knowledge] directly from its original sources. The containing vessel can affect the water, even if it is still called "water." The original sources of knowledge are more fulfilling for the soul, and more protected against error.

It has not been my custom to take from abridged versions of works and I find myself unwilling to do so. Then, the brilliant *Shaikh* Muhammad ibn Sulaiman Al-Muhanna showed me his abridgement of the book *Jawaami'*

Al-'Uloom wa Al-Hikam (Collected Knowledge and Wisdom) by the great *Imam* ibn Rajab – may Allah have mercy on him – which I read. It changed my aversion to abridged works to attraction and led me to acceptance after unwillingness. I had already noticed in Sh. Muhammad fruits of wisdom and a great ability to produce. This wisdom is the result of true piety and real sincerity – at least I consider him to be so, and Allah is his ultimate Judge.

This is a truly great abridgement. It is good for individual study and for public readings, such as in the mosques after the prayer. This is because of the ease of the language used and the wide variety of meanings presented.

It is Allah I ask that this abridged work provide benefit to many as the original work has done. Allah alone is the Helper, the Aid, and the One who brings success.

Abdul-Aziz ibn Marzooq At-Turaifi

1/8/1430 h.

Introduction

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Praise is Allah's, the Lord of all beings. And may His praise and protection be upon his Prophet Muhammad and upon all of his family and his companions.

This is an abridgement of *Jaami' Al-'Uloom wa Al-Hikam* by the great imam Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali, may Allah have mercy on him. *Jaami' Al-'Uloom wa Al-Hikam* is the greatest explanatory commentary of the "Forty Hadith" by Imam An-Nawawi and the most profound. For this reason, the scholars attached great importance to it and considered it a valuable reference for the detailed explanation of those noble hadith which define the fundamentals of Islam – by that I mean the hadith in the original collection: *Al-Arb'een An-Nawiwiya* (The Forty of Imam An-Nawawi).

As a young student, I used to hear a lot of praise from my teachers and imams for this great book and that it contained a great wealth of knowledge and a wide variety of pearls of wisdom. So the other students and I developed a longing to read this book and extract the knowledge, understanding, and pearls of wisdom from the oceans of its blessings. The only thing that got in the way, after undertaking this endeavor, to follow it through was the difficulty of some of its topics – for the beginner – and the complexity of some of its meanings and explanations. This, in spite of the great ability of

the author to be precise and clear in meaning. But, the beginner is in need of much time and great effort before diving into the depths of the great books from our people of knowledge.

After years of "trying" to be a student of knowledge, I returned once more to read Ibn Rajab's book. This time I found it easier to understand those difficult analyses and deeper issues. This helped me to understand the importance of moving step-by-step on the path of seeking knowledge.

When I witnessed this, I realized that many of my brothers who love knowledge may not be able to get it easily directly from the great scholars or by regular attendance at institutes of learning or even by being persistent in reading the great books. I feared that the immense benefit found in this book may be lost to these sincere seekers of knowledge for this reason. At that time, I decided to abridge this book and include in the shorter version only those things that the general public of Muslims can understand, leaving out other than that. My hope is that all will find in it knowledge, good, and guidance, which will suffice them and heal them. It is my hope that as they read it – Allah willing – it will be well-crafted such that they will feel as if they are reading the original book, not an abridged version.

Along with abridging the original, I have also supplied analysis of the narrations found in the original commentary and mentioned the judgment of the scholars as to their authenticity. I have also added my own commentary to a few topics in the book. Next, I presented it to the *Shaikh of Hadith* Abdul-Aziz ibn Marzooq At-Turaify[1] who graciously offered his comments and reviewed my own commentary. May Allah reward him on my behalf and on behalf of my readers a very great reward.

(1) The Shaikh's comments appear in red and are stamped with his name.

Our Lord! Accept this work from us. You are surely the Hearer and the Knower. And forgive us as you are surely ever-accepting of repentance, very merciful. Forgive us along with our parents and all of our beloved – Oh Allah – Amin. And may Allah's praise and safety be upon his Prophet Muhammad.

Written by:

Muhammad ibn Sulaiman ibn Abdullah Al-Muhanna
Riyadh – 14/2/1431
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Biography of Imam Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali

He was an *imam*, a retainer of vast knowledge, versed in a variety of sciences, and his name was Abdur-Rahman ibn Ahmad ibn Rajab Al-Baghdadi, and also Ad-Dimashqi (from Damascus) and Al-Hanbali (of the Hanbali School of Thought).

He was a leader among leaders in knowledge, retaining and passing on vast amounts of knowledge, and in devotion, admonitions and advice, and he was a great author.

He was born in Baghdad in 736 by the Hijri calendar. He moved to Damascus with his father while still young and studied under the great Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim and his contemporaries. In matters of belief, he adhered to the original way of the first generations (of Muslims). For sources, he relied on the authentic narrations and his school of thought was Hanbali. He was a scholar of the law, expert in the meanings of the Qur'an, as well as an accomplished scholar of grammar and history. He was outstanding in the knowledge of flaws in narrations, their chains of narration and the narrators themselves.

He wrote many books which became the primary reference in their respective fields. One of the greatest of those was *Fat-hu Al-Baari' Sharh Al-Bukhari*. This commentary on the most famous book of *hadith* preceded the more well-known book by the same name by Ibn Hajr Al-'Asqalani. He finished it up to the chapter on funerals. What we have of it today is ten volumes. It is amazing in its precision and quality.

Another of his works was *Sharh Sunan At-Tirmidhi*, a commentary on the *hadith* collection of At-Tirmidhi. It was 20 volumes in length as was mentioned by Ibn Hajr. Unfortunately, all we have of it today is two volumes entitled, *Sharh 'Ilal At-Tirmidhi* (a commentary on the flaws found in some of the narrations or their chains).

Another of his works was *Taqreer Al-Qawaa'id wa Tahreer Al-Fawaa'id* (Establishing the principles and deriving their fruits), known as *Qawaa'id ibn Rajab*. It is in four volumes and is one of the most amazing works of Islamic Jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

He also wrote *Lataa'if Al-Ma'arif* (Subtleties of Knowledge) which delved into practical aspects of time and deeds in pursuing a righteous life.

And finally, he wrote *Jami' Al-'Uloom wa Al-Hikam* (Collected Wisdom and Knowledge). It was a commentary on An-Nawawi's "Forty Hadith" collection and is one of the greatest and most famous Islamic books.

Ibn Rajab passed away in the year 795 of the Hijri calendar when he was fifty-nine years old.

The great scholar Ibn Naasir Ad-Deen Ad-Dimashqi, may Allah have mercy on him, reported that: "It was narrated to me by the one who dug Ibn Rajab's grave that the esteemed *imam* came to him a few days before his death and said to him, 'Dig for me a grave and recess right here,' as he pointed to the exact spot where he was later buried. So, I dug it for him in the spot requested. When I finished, he descended into the grave and lied down. He was pleased with it and said, 'This is good,' and then climbed back out." He went on: "By Allah, it was only a few days later that his dead body was brought and I inserted him into that grave-niche."



Hadith Number 1

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From Umar who said: I heard Allah's Messenger say: "**Actions are only according to intentions. And for each, only what they intended. So, whoever made migration for Allah and His Prophet, his migration is for Allah and his Prophet. But whoever made migration for some material gain or for a woman he wished to marry, his migration is only for that for which he made it.**"

Commentary

This hadith is the exclusive narration of Yahya ibn Saeed Al-Ansaariy from Muhammad ibn Ibrahim At-Taimiy from 'Alqamah ibn Waqqas Al-Laithiy from Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him). It has no other completely sound chain of narration other than this one. This is the statement of Ali ibn Al-Madeeniy and others.

Al-Khattabi said, "I know of no difference of opinion among the scholars of *hadith* regarding that, though it was also narrated via Abi Saeed and others."

And the scholars are in agreement as to its authenticity and unanimously accepted it as sound. Imam Al-Bukhari began his book "Al-Sahih" with it as a theme or introduction, reminding us that any action which was not done solely for Allah's pleasure and acceptance is null and void and will bear no fruit or benefit in this life or in the next!

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This is why Abdur-Rahman ibn Mahdiy said, "If all knowledge was categorized into its topics, I would put this hadith from Umar in every single category!"

And it is also reported that he said, "Whoever wants to organize a book, let him begin with the hadith: {Actions are only according to intentions…}"[1]

[Divider]

This hadith is one of those upon which the entire religion of Islam revolves. It is reported that Ash-Shafi'i said, "This one hadith is one third of all knowledge!"

Imam Ahmad said, "The foundation of Islam is based on three narrations: {Actions are only according to intentions…} reported by Umar, {Whoever innovates in this affair of ours…) reported by Aisha and {The lawful is clear and the forbidden is clear…} reported by An-Nu'man ibn Basheer."

Abu Daud said: "The root of the Sunnah in every science is four hadith: {Actions are only according to intentions…}, {The lawful is clear…}, {Of the perfection of one's submission (lit: Islam) is staying away from that which does not concern him…} and {Free yourself from need of worldly things that Allah may love you and free yourself from need for what people possess that the people may love you…}."

And in the following poem by Abi Al-Hassan Taahir ibn Al-Mufawwiz Al-Ma'aafiriy Al-Andalusiy:

The foundation of the religion to us is words.

(1) The one who wrote the most extensive commentary on the many issues arising from this hadith is As-Suyuti. He wrote an entire treatise on this one hadith entitled: "The Attainment of All Hopes Toward an Explanation of 'Actions are only…'"

Four of them from the words of the best of all beings:

Beware of unclear matters, Free yourself of needs, Avoid that which does not concern you, and act on the best of intentions.(2)

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The statement of the Prophet {Actions are only according to intentions...} are also reported as {Actions are according to intentions…}. Both of them imply limitation in the correct analysis.

Scholars differed about the meaning of {Actions are according to intentions…}

Many among the later scholars believe that its meaning is: actions are valid, recognized or accepted according to the intention behind them. Accordingly, "actions" here would mean: actions which are according to the shari'a and which require [a specific] intention.

Others said: Rather, "actions" here should be understood in its generality, not a specific subset. Based on this, the meaning becomes: actions occur or come into being according to intention.(3)

The meaning of {Actions are according to intention…} could also be regarding the status of said actions, i.e., that they are righteous or corrupt, accepted or rejected, rewarded or not rewarded – according to the intention with which they were done.

(2) Al-Hafidh ibn Hajr said: "Abur-Rahman ibn Mahdiy, Ash-Shafi'i (as reported by Al-Buwaiti), Ahmad, Ibn Al-Madeeniy, Abu Daud, At-Tirmidhi, Ad-Daaraqutniy and Hamza Al-Kinaaniy all agree that the hadith of Umar ("Actions are only according…") is one-third of Islam – or some of them said one-fourth and then they had different takes on the rest." From "Al-Fath" 1/17.

(3) TN: Meaning that your outward actions, unless under duress, do indeed reflect your inner intentions as a point of fact.

[Divider]

Next, the Prophet said: {And for each, only what they intended}.

This tells us that nothing accrues to the doer of any deed except that which he intended with it. So, if he intended good, good comes to him. But, if he intended evil, bad will come to him.

This word, "intention"(4) has two applications or meanings in the discourse of the scholars:

First: It means that which distinguishes one act of worship from another. An example would be what distinguishes the noon prayer from the afternoon prayer. They are both four units (*rakaat*) and recited silently, but it is the intention of the one making prayer which determines which one it is. Or, that which distinguishes fasting a day in Ramadhan from a voluntary fast at some other time. Or, it can mean that which distinguishes and act of worship from a mundane act, such as bathing after marital relations to be purified for prayer as opposed to bathing just to be refreshed or to be clean.

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Second: It means identifying what one intends by an action. Is it solely for Allah or for other objectives other than Allah? Or, is it partially for Allah but partially for other than Allah? "Intention" with this meaning is mostly what we find in the discourse of our predecessors the earliest generations of this nation. It has also been mentioned many times in Allah's book without necessarily using the same word by using words close in meaning.

(4) The Arabic word for "intention" is derived from the name for the seed which is inside the date. It is not prescribed anywhere in the Shari'a to utter it such as by saying "I hereby intend to pray the noon prayer" or the like. The only exception is something reported from Ash-Shafi'i regarding the prayers exclusively. But, there is no evidence for that from the Qur'an or the Sunnah, nor is the practice found among the first generations of this nation.

As for what is found in the Sunnah of the Prophet and the discourses of the *salaf*, there are many references of which we will mention a few:

It is reported in the two books of Sahih on the authority of Saad ibn Abi Waqqas that the Prophet said:

"For any expenditure you make seeking therewith Allah's countenance (i.e., His acceptance and pleasure), you will be rewarded – even a morsel of food which you place in your wife's mouth!"(5)

And, from Zaid Al-Yaamiy, who said: "I like to have a clear intention in everything – even in eating and drinking."

And, he also said: "Make intention in everything you do, even when taking out the trash."

Sufyan Ath-Thawri said: "I have not addressed anything about myself more troublesome than my intention, for it flips and changes on me."

Ibn Al-Mubaarak said: "A minor deed may be great by an intention and a great deed may be by reduced to little because of the intention [which accompanied it]."(6)

Al-Fudhail said, speaking about Allah's statement: {Such that He may test you which of you is best in deeds} Al-Mulk: 2, "the most sincere and the most correct." And, he said: "Any deed which is [done] with a completely pure intention (i.e., for Allah) but was not correct is not accepted. And if it is completely correct but what was not done with a completely pure intention, it is not accepted. [It cannot be accepted] unless it is [both] done with sincere intention and correct." He added: "Sincere means done solely for Allah's sake and correct means according to the Sunnah."(7)

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(5) Reported by Al-Bukhari, Hadith number 2742 and by Muslim, hadith number 1628

(6) The people of knowledge have said: "Intention is the trade of the scholars." This means that those who know are rewarded for acts which generate no reward for others – those who haven't perfected profiting from this "trade" by maintaining consciousness and intention (for Allah solely) in everything they do.

(7) TN: This is one of the most important points in this subject regarding which many people are

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As for the Prophet's words (continuing the hadith): "**So, whoever made migration for Allah and His Prophet, his migration is for Allah and his Prophet. But whoever made migration for some material gain or for a woman he wished to marry, his migration is only for that for which he made it.**"

After mentioning that actions are according to the intentions [behind them] and that what a person gets from his [good] deeds is according to his intention in doing that deed, he then mentions an example of such a good deed. Its outward appearance may be the same, but its reality in terms of righteousness or corruption varies widely according to the inner intention behind it. By this, the Prophet informs us that all actions can have very different realities in a similar manner.

So, whoever migrates to the land of Islam out of love for Allah and his Messenger is the true migrant to Allah and his Prophet. And that is a huge source of honor and pride.

This is why the result is expressed the exact same way, "migration for Allah and his Prophet" – because achieving what was intended with this intention is the ultimate of what one could seek in this life and the hereafter.(8)

But, whoever migrated for some worldly gain or because of a woman (he wished to marry), then his migration is only for that which he intended.

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confused or mis-informed. The meaning of this hadith is that a deed which is correct in the law can be negated or compromised by the lack of an intention which is also correct, sincere and solely for Allah's sake. It does NOT mean that one who committed something unlawful and incorrect in the law can claim that a "good intention" makes it a good deed.

(8) And the "migration" of the heart away from evil beliefs and philosophies is even greater than the migration of the body away from evil lands. That's because the latter was only legislated in order to accomplish the former.

In the Prophet's statement: "**his migration is only for that for which he made it,"** is a disdain of the worldly concern for which the migration was made and belittling it by not even mentioning it by name.

It is widely reported that the story of "he who migrated for Umm Qais" (meaning seeking to marry her) was the reason behind this statement of the Prophet, "**But whoever made migration for some material gain or for a woman he wished to marry.**" This has been mentioned by many of the later generations. However, we have found no trace of that in any properly authenticated report or narration – and Allah knows best.[9]

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All good deeds are similar to [Islamic] migration in this regard. Its righteousness or lack thereof is according to the intention behind it. This includes military service (*jihad*), Pilgrimage, etc.

From the two books of Sahih, on the authority of Abi Musa Al-Ash'ariy: A Bedouin came to the Prophet and said, "Oh Messenger of Allah, one man fights for spoils, another fights that he may be mentioned (among the courageous ones) and another fights so that his position be seen – which of them is [fighting] in Allah's path?" The Prophet answered, "Whoever fights that Allah's word be uppermost – he is in Allah's path."[10]

Muslim reported from the narration of Abi Huraira: I heard Allah's Messenger say, "The first one to be ruled (judged) against on the Day of Resurrection is a man who was martyred. He is brought out and reminded of the favors he received, which he acknowledges. Then, it is said: 'So, what did

(9) Let it be known that the story itself was reported with an authentic chain of narration by Saeed ibn Mansour, but there is no mention of this hadith of the Prophet being because of it or in response to it. Refer to "Fath Al-Baari" by Ibn Hajr: 1/16. So, the author here was only rejecting the purported relationship between that story and this hadith, not the validity of the story itself.

(10) Al-Bukhari #2655, Muslim, #1904.

you do with them?' He answers: 'I fought for your sake until I was martyred.' He says: 'You have lied. Rather, you fought in order that it might be said [that you were] a brave and effective fighter – and it has been said.' Then the order was given regarding him and he was dragged on his face until he was thrown in the fire. Next comes a man who acquired knowledge, taught it to others and recited the Qur'an. He is brought out and reminded of the favors he had received which he acknowledges. Then, it is said: 'So, what did you do with them?' He answers: 'I acquired knowledge, taught it to others and read the Qur'an for your sake.' He says: 'You have lied. Rather, you acquired knowledge so that it may be said [he is] a scholar and you read the Qur'an so that it may be said [he is a] great reciter – and it has been said.' Then the order was given regarding him and he was dragged on his face until he was thrown in the fire. Next comes a man to whom Allah gave great wealth and all types of property. He is brought out and acknowledges the great favors he has received. Then, it is said: 'So, what did you do with them?' He answers: 'I did not neglect any form of giving which is pleasing to you without spending toward it for you sake.' He said: 'You have lied. Rather, you did that so that it would be said [he is] a generous man – and it has been said.' Then the order was given regarding him and he was dragged on his face until he was thrown in the fire."

We find elsewhere harsh warnings about seeking knowledge for any other reason than purely for the sake of Allah, such as this narration reported by Ahmad, Abu Daud and Ibn Majah narrated by Abu Huraira from the Prophet, that he said: "Whoever acquires knowledge which is to be sought for Allah's sake but only does so for some worldly gain will not even find any trace of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection" (meaning not even a whiff or a smell).(11)

(11) Ahmad, 2/338; Abu Daud, #3664; Ibn Majah, #252; Ibn Hibban (who rated it authentic), 1/279; Al-Hakim, 1/85. Al-Iraaqiy said, in his critique of "Al-Ihyaa" (1/178): Its chain is sahih (authentic). Al-Albaaniy said likewise in his critique of "Al-Mishkaah," (1/78).

At-Tirmidhi reported from the narration of Kaab ibn Maalik, from the Prophet, who said: "Whoever sought knowledge in order to argue with the ignorant, or to compete with the scholars, or to attract the admiration of the people, Allah will put him in the fire."(12)

We also find similar warnings against any deeds in general not done purely for Allah's sake as in this hadith reported by Ahmad from the narration of Ubayy ibn Kaab from the Prophet who said: "Give good tidings to this nation of glory, greatness, religiosity and empowerment in the land. But, whoever among them does a good deed [of that which is done for] the hereafter [but does it] for the sake of this world, will have no share in the hereafter."(13)

Know that deeds done for other than Allah fall into categories:

In some cases it may be pure ostentation, where the only intention behind the deed is to be seen by others (created beings) for some worldly purpose. This is like the state of the *munafiqeen* ("hypocrites") for example when making prayer (to convince the Muslims that they are one of them). This type of pure ostentation would rarely happen with a believer with regard to obligatory acts like prayer and fasting, but it may occur in payment of Zakat, Pilgrimage or other very visible acts of obedience or those whose benefit extends to others. Sincerity in such deeds is precious.

No Muslim doubts that such deeds are null and void and that its doer deserves Allah's displeasure and His punishment.

Other times, a deed may be for the sake of Allah, but mixed with some degree of ostentation. If this tainted intention is at the root of the act, the authentic texts indicate that it, too, is null and void and of no validity like the previous category:

(12) At-Tirmidhi, #2654; Al-Hakim, (1/76), but its chain of narration is weak.

(13) Ahamd, #2654; Al-Hakim, 1/86. It's chain of narration is weak.

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In the Sahih of Muslim, from the narration of Abi Huraira, from the Prophet, who said: "Allah, most blessed and high says: 'I am the partner with the least need of any partnership. So, whoever does any deed but divides it (i.e., his intention behind it) between me and another, I will leave him [solely] to his 'partner'.'"[14]

It has been reported by Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Majah, from the narration of Abi Saeed ibn Abi Fadhaala – and he was a Companion – who said: "The Prophet said: 'When Allah collects the earliest generations through the latest generations for the Day Without Doubt, a caller will call out: Whoever did any deed for Allah but while dividing it (i.e., his intention), let him [today] seek his reward from other than Allah!'" [The narrator continued]: "For Allah is the partner with the least need for any partnership."[15]

On the other hand, if the root of the deed was solely for Allah, but some element of ostentation afflicted the doer after the fact: if it was a fleeting condition and the individual opposed and rejected it, it will not harm him or his action in any way, by complete agreement [of the scholars].

But if he just went with it and allowed it to continue, does it nullify his deed or harm him in any way? Or, will he be rewarded based on the initial root of the deed and his intention therewith? In this there is a difference of opinion among the scholars of the earliest generations. Imam Ahmad and Ibn Jareef gave weight to the opinion that the deed is not nullified by that and the doer is rewarded based on his original intention.

Ibn Jareer also mentioned that this difference of opinion is regarding an action whose end is connected to its beginning (i.e., it's a single "unit") like prayer, fasting or Pilgrimage. As for what is not of this nature (i.e., is a series

(14) Muslim, #2985

(15) Reported by Ahmad, 3/466; At-Tirmidhi, #3154 and he said "good, but unique." Al-Albaaniy rated it 'good' (*hassan*) in more than one book. See "Sahih Al-Jaami," #482

of individual acts) like reading the Qur'an, remembering Allah, giving from one's wealth or spreading knowledge, these acts are nullified by an intention of ostentation which contaminates an intention for Allah's sake and that requires a re-affirming of a correct intention.[16]

Another case is that of one who does a good deed sincerely, but after that, Allah puts into the hearts of the people praise of him for that. He rejoices in this generosity and mercy from Allah and is optimistic because of it. This will not harm him nor detract from his good deed. We find this meaning in the narration of Abi Dharr from the Prophet: He (the Prophet) was asked about a man who does a good deed for Allah's sake and then the people praise him for that. The Prophet said: "This is the advanced (i.e., early) good tiding for the believer." Muslim[17]

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We will limit our discussion of sincerity and ostentation to this, as it is sufficient.

[Divider]

In summary, how apt is the statement of Sahl bin Abdullah: "There is nothing more difficult upon the individual than sincerity – because he has no share in it!"

Yusuf ibn Al-Hussain Ar-Raaziy said: "The most precious thing in this world is sincerity. I make so much effort to remove ostentation from my heart. It's as if it just grows back in another shade."

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(16) The reward is cut off by the change in intention, but he is nonetheless rewarded for what came before that such as the building of mosques, hospitals or institutes of learning and the like.

(17) Muslim, #2642

And, Ibn 'Uyaina said: "A prayer that Mutarrif bin Abdullah used to make was: 'O Allah! I seek forgiveness from you for anything from which I repented but then committed again. And, I seek forgiveness from you for any commitment I placed upon myself for your sake but then failed to fulfill it. And, I seek forgiveness from you for any act which I imagined I had done solely for your sake, but my heart (i.e., intention) was mixed with that which you already know.'"[18]

(18) A narration with meaning was also narrated by Ma'qal bin Yassar who said: I set out with Abi Bakr As-Siddique to the Prophet who said: "Oh, Abu Bakr: Verily *shirk* (division between Allah and other than Allah) is more hidden among you than the footsteps of an ant." Abu Bakr said: Isn't *shirk* limited to one who makes another deity along with Allah? The Prophet said: "By the One in whose hand my soul is, *shirk* is more hidden than the footsteps of an ant. Should I not direct you to something which, if you say it, it is removed – from the smallest of it to the largest?" He continued: "Say: Oh Allah! I seek refuge in You that I should associate any with you knowingly and I seek forgiveness from You for such of which I am unaware." Al-Bukhari mentioned it in his book "Al-Adab Al-Mufrad" #716 and it is authentic.

Hadith Number 2

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From Umar ibn Al-Khattab who said: "**We were with Allah's Messenger one day when a man appeared. He was dressed in very white clothing, his hair was very black and there were no signs of having traveled upon him, though none of us recognized him. He came and sat facing the Prophet with his knees touching his and put his hands on his thighs.**

Then he said: 'O Muhammad, tell me about Islam!'

Allah's Messenger said: 'Islam is to bear witness that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, that you establish and maintain the prayer, pay the Zakat, fast Ramadhan and make Pilgrimage to the House (of Allah, in Makka) if you are able to do so.' He (the visitor) said: 'You have spoken the truth.' We were amazed that he asked him in this manner and then verified what he said.

Then, he said: 'Tell me about *imaan* (belief)!'

He (the Prophet) said: 'That you believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His Messengers, in the Last Day and that you believe in the predestination of everything [what we perceive as] good or bad.' He said: 'You have spoken the truth.'

Next, he said: 'Tell me about *ihsaan* (a level higher than *imaan*)!'

He (the Prophet) said: 'That you worship Allah as if you see him. For surely, even if you don't see Him, he surely sees you.'

Then, he said: 'Tell me about the Hour (i.e., the end of this world as we know it).'

He (the Prophet) said: 'The one asked is no more informed about it than the one asking.'

He said: 'Then tell me about its signs!'

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He (the Prophet) said: 'That a female slave should give birth to her mistress, and you will see the barefooted, impoverished herders of sheep competing in the building of tall buildings.'

Then, the man left. I stayed for a good while and then [the Prophet] said to me: 'Oh Umar. Do you know who that questioner was?'

I said: 'Allah and His Messenger know best.'

He (the Prophet) said: 'That was [the angel] Jibreel. He came to you to teach you your religion.'

This [exact] narration was reported by Muslim but not Al-Bukhari. They both reported it (with slightly different wording) from the narration of Abu Huraira.

This is a very great and fundamental hadith which includes an explanation of the entire religion of Islam. That is why the Prophet said at the end: "**That was [the angel] Jibreel. He came to you to teach you your religion,**" after explaining the level of Islam, the level of *imaan* and the level of *ihsaan*, all of that being part of the religion.

As for Islam, it is explained as the external (apparent) actions of the individual in terms of statements and acts. The first of that is the statement of bearing witness that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger. This is an action of the tongue.[1] Next is the establishment of the prayer, paying the Zakat, fasting Ramadhan and making Pilgrimage to Makka for those who are able.

These acts can be divided into purely physical like prayer and fasting, fiscal or economic like paying the Zakat, and a combination of the two, like the pilgrimage for those living far from Makka.

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What is mentioned here is the foundation of action upon which Islam is built. A more extensive commentary on that will come in the explanation of another hadith from the narration of Umar, "**Islam is built upon five…** in its place (if Allah, Most High, wishes).

[Divider]

As for *imaan*, the Prophet has explained it in this hadith as internally held beliefs, saying: "**That you believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His Messengers, in the Last Day and that you believe in the predestination of everything [what we perceive as] good or bad.**"

Allah has also mentioned belief in these five fundamentals in several places such as:

{The Messenger believes in what was sent down to him from his Lord, as do the believers. All of them believe in Allah, his angels, his Books and his Messengers. We do not differentiate between any of his Messengers…} Al-Baqarah:285

(1) TN: An action, which of course, must be accompanied by the correct, true and sincere intention. See the previous hadith.

{…Rather, righteousness is one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book and the Prophets…} Al-Baqarah: 177

{Those who believe in realities unseen, who maintain the prayer and give of that which we have provided them. And those who believe in that which was sent down to you and that which was sent down before you and are certain of the hereafter.} Al-Baqarah:3-4

Belief in the Messengers means belief in all that about which they informed us: such as the angels, the Prophets, the [divine] Books, resurrection after death, predestination, and other things among the details of what they informed us about, such as Allah's attributes and descriptions of the Last Day, including the scales, the bridge, Paradise and Hell-fire.

He included in the definition if *imaan* that one must believe in the predestination of all things, good and bad. Because of this very point, Ibn Umar narrated this hadith and invoked it as proof against those who denied predestination. They believed that things just happened, meaning that they were not preceded by divine determination. Ibn Umar was very harsh with them and declared his innocence and distance from them and their beliefs. He informed them that no good deeds could be accepted from them if they were not believers in divine predestination.

So, if it is said that the Prophet differentiated in this hadith between Islam and *imaan*, making all actions "Islam" but not "*imaan,*" the first generations of this nation absolutely rejected those who deemed actions to not be part of belief or faith (*imaan*).(2)

(2) TN: In other words, this hadith defines "Islam" as the practical application, as the deeds that one does (internal, external and social) which constitute "islam" or surrender/submission to the Creator. *Imaan* is a higher level. As such, it includes the previous level – the requisite actions of a Muslim – and adds to that firm conviction in all of the core beliefs given to us by Allah through his final Messenger.

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Let it be said that the reality is as you have said. There are many proofs that actions are part of faith and not separate from it, such as:

{The believers are none other than those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts tremble and when His signs are recited to them they increase their faith and upon their Lord is their reliance. Those who establish the prayer and spend from what we have given them. Those are the true believers.} Al-Anfaal

And, in the two books of Sahih from the narration of Ibn Abbas that the Prophet said to a delegation from Abdul Qais: "I order you with four things: belief in Allah. And do you understand what belief in Allah is? Bearing witness that there is no deity except Allah and establishing the prayer, paying the Zakat, fasting Ramadhan and that you turn over one-fifth of the spoils of war."(3)

So, how do we reconcile all of these texts? We have the hadith about Jibreel's questions about Islam and *imaan* and the Prophet's differentiation between them. Then, we have the explicit inclusion of actions in the meaning of "Islam," without any mention of *imaan*. This becomes clear when we understand a basic principle here. It is that there are terms which are inclusive of multiple meanings when used alone. But, when that same term is paired with another term, it becomes indicative of only a subset of those meanings, with the other terms being indicative of the remainder. This is like the terms *faqeer* (impoverished) versus *miskeen* (poor). When either is used alone, all those with unmet needs fall under its meaning. However, when they are used together, each one indicates a specific subset of those in need not now included in the meaning of the other.

Similarly, the terms Islam and *imaan*. When either is used alone, it includes the full meaning of the other. But, when they are used comparatively

(3) Al-Bukari, #523; Muslim, #17

(together), each one indicates its own subset of the total meaning and not the remainder which is now indicated by the other.

This analysis clarifies the reality in the question of Islam and *imaan*. In brief, we say: When either word is used alone, there is no difference between them, but if they are used together, they each have their own meaning.[4]

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[Divider]

Regarding the Prophet's interpretation of the term *ihsaan*: "**That you worship Allah as if you see him.**" This indicates a slave of Allah worshipping in this manner, which is consciousness of Allah and his omnipotence and closeness and that He is directly before him as if he can see Him. This consciousness in turn necessitates piety, fear and awe. That, in turn, necessitates sincerity in worship and exertion of maximum effort in the perfection and completeness of one's servitude to Allah.

Then, the Prophet said, "**For surely, even if you don't see Him, he surely sees you.**"

It has been said: This is in support of the prior statement. For, if the slave is ordered to be conscious of Allah in worship and aware of His proximity to the degree that it's as if he sees Him before him, that level of consciousness may prove difficult. So, he is helped in maintaining this level of awareness by his knowledge that Allah indeed sees him and is fully aware of all that he attempts to conceal or shows openly.

Alternatively, it has been said: Rather, it is an indication that whoever finds difficulty in worshipping as if he sees Allah before him should worship

(4) This is the most sensible statement regarding this question and the one in most harmony with all the various texts. And, Allah knows best. This is what the author said in his valuable commentary on Sahih Al-Bukhari entitled "Fath Al-Baari" 1/120.

Allah aware that Allah sees him. This will cause him to be humbled and shy because of Allah's watching over him. This is why some have said: "Beware of Allah lest He become the least of those looking at you!"

Others said: "Fear Allah commensurate with his power over you and have shame from Allah commensurate with His proximity to you."

Certain female seekers from the earliest generations said: "Whoever works for Allah's sake based on seeing is a knower [of Allah]. But whoever works for Allah's sake based on Allah's seeing of him is one made sincere." So, she indicated the two levels previously mentioned:

First: The level of sincerity. This is when the slave of Allah acts based on consciousness that Allah sees him and is privy to all his secrets and is close to him (present). When a slave maintains this consciousness in everything he does and bases his actions on this, he becomes sincere toward Allah. This is because this uninterrupted consciousness in all he does prevents any distraction by other than Allah or seeking other than Allah with one's actions.

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Second: The level of witnessing. This means that the slave works for Allah's sake as a result of his seeing Allah with his heart. This happens when his heart is filled with the light of *imaan*, his vision penetrates via awareness and the unseen becomes like that which is seen.

This is the reality of the level of *ihsaan* referred to in the account of Jibreel. Individuals differ within this level according to the strength and reach of their vision.

One group of scholars interpreted the term "ultimate paradigm"(5) mentioned in Allah's statement:

{He is the one who initiates creation and then repeats it and this is so easy for Him. His is the ultimate paradigm in the heavens and the earth and He is the Mighty, the Wise.} Ar-Rum:27, with this meaning.

This is similar to Allah's statement: {Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp…} An-Nur:35

The meaning here is "The similitude of His light in the heart of a believer," as was said by Ubayy ibn Kaab and others among the first generations.

[Divider]

When Jibreel asked, "**Tell me about the Hour (i.e., the end of this world as we know it),**" the Prophet replied, "**The one asked is no more informed about it than the one asking.**"

This means that all of Allah's creation are equal in their [complete lack of] knowledge about the Hour. Allah has chosen to keep this knowledge completely to Himself.

We find in Sahih Al-Bukhari,(6) from the narration of Ibn Umar from the Prophet who said: "**The keys to the unseen are five, none know them except Allah….**" Then, the Prophet recited this verse:

{Allah is the possessor of the knowledge of the Hour, He sends the rain, He knows what is in the wombs, and no soul knows what it will earn tomorrow nor in what land it will die. Allah is surely knowing, informed.} Luqman:34

(5) TN: The Arabic used (المثل الاعلى) has been translated various other ways such as: highest attribute, highest description, sublime similitude, loftiest similitude, exalted attributes, etc. Allah is exalted, uppermost and perfect in his attributes and no comparison with others is possible.

(6) Bukhari, #4778

Then, Jibreel said, “**Then tell me about its signs.**”

This means, tell us about the signs which indicate that the Hour is near.

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Upon which, the Prophet mentioned two signs of the Hour:

First: “**That a female slave should give birth to her mistress.**”

This is an indication of the conquest of many lands to come. There will be many prisoners and slaves resulting from that such that they have many offspring. So the mother may be a slave but her children by him gain a status similar to his, being his children. So, it happens that her children are of similar status to her master.(7)

The second sign: “**you will see the barefooted, impoverished herders of sheep competing in the building of tall buildings.**”

This means that the lowliest of people will become their leaders. They will accumulate massive amounts of wealth until they compete with one another in building very tall, ornate and well-constructed buildings.(8)

The theme of what has been mentioned regarding the signs of the Hour all come down to: affairs will be relegated to inappropriate individuals. This is as the Prophet said when asked about the Hour:

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(7) This meaning has been reported from the early generations and is certainly plausible per the linguistic meanings of the words. However, it relationship to “signs of the Last Day” is less straightforward. An alternative explanation from some of the scholars is that the reference here is to disrespect of children for their parents is one of the signs of the closeness of the Judgment Day. It reaches such an extreme with the male and female children acting as if they are the masters and their mother is their slave! This is called (عقوق الوالدين) and is mentioned many times in the Islamic sources as one of the most heinous sins.

(8) This is one of the signs which has come to pass in the lands of the Arabs without doubt. Mostly, when signs of the Last Day are mentioned in the revelation, the main intention is among the Arabs most of all.

"When authority is in the hands of those inappropriate for it, expect the Hour."[9]

All of this is from the chaos and reversal of realities and of human affairs in the last days.

(9) Bukhari, #59, from the narration of Abu Huraira

Hadith Number 3

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From Abdullah ibn Umar who said: I heard Allah's Messenger say: "**Islam is built upon five: testimony that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's slave and Messenger, establishing the prayer, paying Zakat, Pilgrimage to the House (in Makka) and fasting Ramadhan."** Reported by Muslim and Bukhari.

In this hadith, the Prophet illustrates the reality of Islam using the analogy of a building. The foundation or supports of the building are five. The building cannot exist or remain standing without all five of them. All of the rest of Islam is like the details of the structure. If some of them are missing or damaged, the building is flawed or incomplete but standing nonetheless. The loss of some features does not cause its complete collapse or destruction. Such is not the case with these five pillars, our foundational aspects of Islam. Islam itself disappears with the loss of all five, without any doubt. And there is definitely no Islam in the absence of the first of these pillars: the testimony of faith.

[Divider]

As for establishing the [five daily] prayers, multiple hadith have been reported indicating that one who abandons them has left Islam. In the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Jabir, from the Prophet, who said, "**What stands between a man and idolatry and disbelief is abandoning the prayer.**"[1] A similar statement was reported by Buraidah,[2] Thaubaan, Anis and others.

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And from the narration of Mu'adh from the Prophet who said, "**The crown of this affair and its central support is the prayer.**"[3] So, he likened prayer to the central pole in a large tent. The tent cannot stand without it and if the pole falls, the tent falls.

Umar said: "There is no share in Islam for one who abandons the prayer."[4]

Abdullah ibn Shaqeeq said: "The Companions of Allah's Messenger did not see the abandoning of any act to be disbelief (rejection of Islam) except for the prayer."[5]

This was the opinion of a group of scholars from the earlier and later generations. It is the opinion of Ibn Al-Mubaarak, Ahmad, Is-haq, and Is-haq reported it as a matter of consensus among the scholars.[6]

(1) Muslim, #82

(2) This refers to the famous hadith in which the Prophet said, "**The covenant between us and them is the prayer. Whoever abandons it has disbelieved (or rejected).**" Ahmad, 5/346; At-Tirmidhi, #2621; An-Nasaa'i, 1/231; Ibn Majah, #1079. It is an authentic (sahih) hadith.

(3) This is in fact Hadith Number 29 in this book.

(4) Reported by Malik in Al-Muwatta', #51 from the narration of Musawwir ibn Makhrama and its chain is authentic.

(5) Reported by At-Tirmidhi, #2622 and its chain is authentic (to the Companion whose words are reported).

(6) And just as it was a point of consensus among the Companions, so too among the following generation (At-tabi'een), as was reported by Al-Maroozi from Hamad from Ayub who said: "That abandoning of the prayer is disbelief. We have no disagreement about that."

Muhammad ibn Nasr Al-Maroozi said: "It is the opinion of the majority of the scholars of hadith."

Another group among them was of the opinion that: Anyone who abandons any of the five pillars of Islam intentionally has left Islam by so doing. This has been reported as Ahmad's opinion, also, and a group of his students chose this opinion. It was also held by Ibn Habeeb from the Maliki school.[7]

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It is also reported from Ahmad that he said: "The abandoning of prayer and Zakat – specifically – are disbelief contrary to fasting and pilgrimage."[8]

Note that military service was not mentioned in this hadith from Ibn Umar even though it is the best of all good deeds. That is for two reasons:

First: Military service is an obligation on the totality of the Muslims. Once a number sufficient for it have risen to the task, there is no further obligation upon the remainder. On the other hand, all of the pillars mentioned in the hadith are individual obligations.

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(7) The strongest opinion regarding the prayer – and knowledge belongs to Allah – is that one who abandons some of the prayers in the day does not leave Islam unless he abandons all of them. As long as he prays two of them in the day – and acknowledges the obligation of the other three – he remains a Muslim. In any case, this is less heinous than *shirk*. This is based on what Ahmad reported in his book Al-Musnad from the narration of Nasr ibn Aasim who said: "A man from among us came to Allah's Messenger and sought to give his oath but based on that he would only pray twice per day. The Prophet accepted his oath on that basis."

Nevertheless, anyone who abandons a single prayer until its time is over without any valid excuse or need has committed a sin more heinous than alcohol or adultery because of the extreme importance of prayer in the law (*shari'a*).

(8) For a more in-depth analysis of this question, refer to the book mentioned recently by the same author entitled, "Fath Al-Baari Sharh Al-Bukhari" 1/20-25 (not to be confused by the more famous book by the same name by Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqlaani).

Second: The obligation of military service will not continue until the end of time. Rather, when Isa (Jesus) returns – and there is at that time no other religion except the pure monotheism of Islam – at that time, wars and battle will come to an end. There will be no further need for military service. This, too, is different from these five pillars. They will continue to be obligatory upon each and every believer until Allah concludes this affair. And Allah knows best.

Hadith Number 4

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From Abdullah ibn Mas'ood who said: "Allah's Messenger narrated to me – and he is the truthful, and one who is believed: '**Each of you are formed in your mother's womb for forty days as a drop, then as something hanging for a similar period, then as [something like] a chewed piece of meat for another similar period. Then, Allah sends the angel, who inserts the soul and is [ordered to write] four things: He records his provision (wealth), his deeds, his lifespan and [his end] whether miserable (in hell) or joyous (in Paradise). For, by the One other than whom there is no deity, one of you will continue to do the deeds of the people of Paradise until there is nothing but an arms-length between him and it when his destiny overcomes him, he commits a deed of the people of the fire and he enters it. And [another] one of you will continue to do the deeds of the people of the fire until there is nothing between him and it but and arms-length when his destiny overcomes him and he commits a deed of the people of Paradise and he enters it!'"** Reported by Muslim and Bukhari.

This hadith is agreed-upon by the two books of Sahih and has been accepted by the entire nation as correct.

It informs us that the fetus evolves during the first 120 days through three stages and that each stage lasts for 40 days. For the first forty days, it is like a "drop." Then, in the next 40 days it is like a "scab" or "something hanging." Then, in the third forty-day period it is like a chewed piece of meat. Finally, after 120 days of gestation, the angel comes and inserts the human soul into the fetus and records the four things mentioned with regard to that soul.

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Allah has also mentioned in several places, the evolution of the fetus through these stages, such as:

{O people! If you are in doubt regarding the resurrection, [know that] we created you from dust, then from a drop, then from something hanging, then from a piece of flesh formed but unformed that we may clarify for you. And we cause to continue in the womb whatever we wish to a term prescribed.} Al-Hajj: 5

These three stages: a drop, something hanging, and a piece of flesh, have been mentioned in multiple places in the Qur'an, and in some places more stages than that have been mentioned, such as:

{And we have created man from the essence of [all kinds of] soil. Then, we make him a drop in an enabling environment. Then, we created the drop as something like a clot, hanging, created that clot as semi-formed flesh, then we made the flesh bone and we covered the bone with flesh, then we established it as a new creation. So blessed is Allah, the best Creator.} Al-Mu'mineen: 12-14

So, this is seven stages in the creation of a human being that Allah mentioned here, all of them before the placing of the human soul into what is being formed. Ibn Abbas used to say, "The son of Adam is created from seven," and then he would recite these verses.

Because of this, some scholars of the law have deemed it permissible for a woman to abort a fetus before the soul has entered it (i.e., before 120 days) and they equated it with coitus interruptus (withdrawal)! This is a weak analogy, however, because in the first case there is a fetus which has begun to develop and in the second case no such thing has happened and may never happen.

Our companions (meaning with the school of jurisprudence) have clearly stated that once the drop becomes "something hanging," aborting it is no longer lawful. This is because the child has become established and begun to form unlike the prior stage – the drop – where it may yet form and develop or may not.[1]

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "…**For, by the One other than whom there is no deity, one of you will continue to do the deeds of the people of Paradise until…**" until the end of the hadith:

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It is said that this last section is actually the words of Ibn Mas'ood (the narrator) and not a continuation of the quote from the Prophet, although subsequent narrators may have taken it that way. Nonetheless, this same meaning has been reported from the Prophet from a variety of sources.

(1) Aborting a fetus out of fear of poverty [even] before the entry of the soul is not permitted because it betrays a lack of faith in Allah (the Provider). However, if it is done for a legitimate benefit such as aborting the fetus before the entry of the soul because on is living amongst disbelievers or because of some illness or impediment regarding the fetus verified by experts in medicine, or for the sake of the health of the mother, then there is no problem with that. And Allah knows best.

In the collection of Bukhari, from the narration of Sahl bin Saad, from the Prophet who said: "**Actions are according to their final seals.**"(2) And, as reported by Muslim from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet who said: "**A man may do – for a long time – the deeds of the people of Paradise but then they are sealed for him with an act of the people of Hell. And another may do – for a long time – the deeds of the people of Hell but then they are sealed for him with a deed of the people of Paradise.**"(3)

And, in both books of Sahih, from the narration of Sahl ibn Saad, that the Prophet was in a battle against the pagans. Among his Companions there was a man who went after every lone fighter who got separated from the group or wasn't with them and struck them with his sword. They said, "No one has been more effective for us today than this man." The Prophet said, "**He is among the people of the fire.**" So, one man among the people said, "I will observe him." Then the man received a severe injury and wished to rush his death. He placed the handle of his sword on the ground and put the tip in the middle of his chest and fell on his sword, killing himself. The man (who had been observing him) returned to the Prophet and said, "I bear witness that you are Allah's Messenger!" And, he told him the story. Then, the Prophet said, "**A man will do the deeds of the people of Paradise – as it appears to people – but he is among the people of Hell. Another may do the deeds of the people of Hell – as it appears to people - but is in fact among the people of Paradise.**"(4) Bukhari added to his narration of this hadith: "**And actions are according to their final seals.**"(5)

(2) Bukhari, #6607. "Seal" here means the last of them or one's final acts.

(3) Muslim, #2651

(4) Bukhari, #4202; Muslim, #112

(5) Also narrated from Sahl, Bukhari, #6607

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His statement “**as it appears to people**” indicates that the inner reality of things can be at variance with their outward appearance. And that an evil “seal” to one’s actions can be by something internal to the individual and not seen by people – but an evil deed nonetheless. This hidden factor can indeed bring about an evil seal upon one’s deeds at the time of death.

Similarly, an individual may continue to commit the deeds of the people of Hell but buried within him is an element of good. Then, if this good dominates in the last part of his life, it can bring about a good seal upon his entire life.

Abdul-Aziz ibn Abi Ruwaad said: “I attended a man at his death as he was being reminded to say there is no deity except Allah. He continued to say that he rejects what is being said to him until he died in that state. So, I inquired about him and was told that he was an alcoholic.” So, Abdul-Aziz used to advise people to beware of all sins for that is what cast this man to such a fate.

Sufyan[6] used to be extremely fearful. He used to cry and say, “I fear that I may be in Allah’s book among the miserable!” And, he would cry saying, “I fear that my faith may be taken away at the time of death.”

Malik ibn Dinar used to stand for the entire night clutching his beard and saying, “O my Lord, I have known the residents of Paradise and the residents of Hell, so in which of these two realms is Malik’s final abode?”

The Companions of the Prophet and those who followed them of the righteous first generations used to fear for themselves regarding hypocrisy.[7] Their fear and trepidation about this was huge. A believer fears for himself from minor (subtle) hypocrisy. And he fears that it may come to dominate at the time of death, becoming greater hypocrisy and leading to an evil seal. As

(6) The reference is to Sufyan Ath-Thawri, the famous Imam, who passed away in the year 161 h.

(7) Refer to a lengthy discussion of the fears of the early generations regarding hypocrisy by this same author in his work “Fath Al-Barri”, 1/177. He also discusses this in his commentary on the 48th hadith in this book.

we mentioned, these unseen inner flaws can in fact become what leads to an evil conclusion (seal) to one's deeds.

The Prophet himself used to consistently say in his supplications: "**Oh, turner of hearts, keep my heart firm upon your way.**" So, it was said to him, "Oh Allah's Prophet, we believe in you and in that which you have brought. Do you still fear for us?" He said, "**Yes! Verily, the hearts are between two of Allah's fingers and He turns them however He wishes.**" This was reported by Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi from the narration of Anas.[8]

Muslim reported, from the narration of Abdullah ibn Amr, that he heard the Prophet say, "**Verily the hearts of all of mankind are between two of the fingers of the Most Merciful, and He directs them wherever He wishes.**" Then, he said, "**O Allah, director of all hearts. Direct our hearts to obedience to you.**"

There are many hadith conveying this same meaning.

(8) Ahmad, 3/122; At-Tirmidhi, #2140 and he said, "This is a good (*hassan*) hadith. Shaikh Al-Albaniy rated it *sahih* in his analysis of the book "As-Sunnah" by Ibn Abi Aasim (#225).

Hadith Number 5

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From Aisha who said: Allah's Messenger said: "**Whoever introduces into this affair of ours that which is not of it, [it] is rejected.**" Reported by Muslim and Bukhari. And, in a version reported by Muslim: "**Whoever does any action not sanctioned by this affair of ours, [it] is rejected.**"

This hadith represents a huge fundamental principle of Islam. It is like a scale upon which all outward actions can be weighed just like the previous hadith "**Actions are only according to intentions…**" is a scale for weighing the inner reality of our actions.

Just as every [good] deed with which its doer did not sincerely desire Allah's acceptance and pleasure, has no benefit or reward for its doer, so likewise any deed which does not have the approval of Allah and His Messenger in the law will be rejected and thrown back to its doer. Any action which has been innovated and attributed to Islam but which was not ordered or instituted by Allah and his Messenger has nothing whatsoever to do with Islam.

In this vein, the Prophet used to say in his sermons: "**Verily, the most truthful discourse is Allah's book, the best guidance is Muhammad's guidance and the worst of all matters are the innovated ones.**"(1) (We will postpone the detailed discussion of innovations in Islam until the commentary on the hadith of Al-'Irbaadh ibn Saariya.(2) Here, we will discuss actions which are not sanctioned by the order of the Lawgiver and their rejection.

(1) Muslim, #867

(2) Wherein the Prophet said, "**Beware of innovated matters,**" which is the 28th hadith in this book.

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This hadith states in the clearest of terms that any action not sanctioned by the Lawgiver[3] is rejected. And, it points explicitly to the fact that any deed which IS sanctioned by the order of the Lawgiver is not rejected.

So the meaning, therefore, is that anyone whose actions are outside of the law (*shari'a*) and not within the bounds of the law, said action is rejected.[4]

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**not sanctioned by this affair of ours:**"[5]

This indicates that all actions of every individual should be within the orders of the law (*shari'a*) and that the rulings of the law govern and judge all with its orders and its prohibitions. So, whoever's actions are within the rulings of the law and in harmony with them, such is accepted. But, whoever is outside of that or in conflict with it is rejected.

All actions fall into two broad categories: 1) acts of worship, and 2) interaction with others.

As for acts of worship: If they are at odds with the legislation of Allah and his Messenger in their entirety, they are rejected, thrown back to their doer and the doer of such actions falls under Allah's statement:

(3) This, of course, refers to all affairs within the realm of religion and worship. It does not refer to new things in worldly matters such as clothing, modes of transportation, housing, etc.

(4) TN: The Arabic is ambiguous and could carry the meaning that the deed itself is what is "rejected" or that the individual who committed said deed is in fact the one who is "rejected.. The result is more or less the same.

(5) TN: The Arabic (ليس عليه امرنا) could be translated "our order is not upon it", "it does not fall under our order", "our order does not support it", etc. Or, "order" in all of these cases could mean our "affair", i.e., Islam.

{Or do they have partners who have legislated for them that for which Allah has given no permission…?} Ash-Shuraa: 21.

So, whoever attempts to come closer to Allah by an action (which he deems a "good deed," of course) which Allah has not defined as such (a deed with which to come closer to Allah) will find his action to be void, rejected and thrown back in his face. This is similar to the inhabitants of Makka, just before the coming of the Prophet, who had corrupted the original teachings of Ibrahim and whose "prayers," as they circled the *Kaaba* in Makka, consisted of whistling and clapping.

Similarly, the state of one who believes himself to be coming closer to Allah by listening to music, dancing, or exposing his head other than during a pilgrimage.

Something which is an act of coming closer to Allah in a particular act of worship or ritual may not always be so in general. The Prophet once saw a man standing in the sun. When he asked him about what he was doing, he replied that he had sworn an oath that he would stand and not sit, not seek any shade and fast. The Prophet ordered him to sit down in the shade but continue his fast.(6) So, the Prophet did not rule that standing and exposing oneself to the sun were acts of worship with which to fulfill his oath. This in spite of the fact that standing is in fact an act of worship in other contexts such as in prayer, while making the call to prayer or while making supplication at *Arafat* during the Major Pilgrimage. Also, exposing oneself to the sun and elements is an act of worship for one in the state of *ihraam* while making Pilgrimage. So, we see that not everything which is an act of worship in one context is so in every context. The key to all of that is to follow what the law has specified in each and every context.

(6) Bukhari, #6704

The same would apply to one who seeks to worship Allah with something which has been specifically forbidden such as fasting on the day of '*Eid* or praying a *nafl* prayer during the times of day when that has been prohibited.

As for one who does something which is in its origin a valid form of coming closer to Allah, but they inject into it something not according to the law or they omit something the law makes a necessary part of it, this is also at odds with the law to the extent of the omissions or commissions which are not sanctioned by it.



Hadith Number 6

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From An-Nu'maan ibn Basheer who said: I heard Allah's Messenger say: **"The lawful is clear and the prohibited is clear. Between them are some unclear matters. Most people don't know their reality. So, whoever is wary of the unclear matters has maintained the innocence of his religion and his dignity. But, whoever dwells in the unclear matters, falls into the prohibited. He is like a shepherd who grazes his animals right on the boundaries of a forbidden sanctuary. He is always on the brink of [any of his animals] slipping into it.**

Surely, every king has his forbidden zones. And verily, the forbidden zone of Allah is what He has prohibited. And, in every body there is a piece of flesh which, when it is wholesome the whole body is wholesome but when it is spoiled, the whole body becomes spoiled. Verily! It is the heart." Reported by Bukhari and Muslim

The Prophet said: "**The lawful is clear and the prohibited is clear. Between them are some unclear matters. Most people don't know their reality.**"

This means that things which are completely lawful are clear and there is no confusion regarding them. Also, things which are completely prohibited are likewise clear. However, between those two are many issues which are confusing or unclear to most people: is it lawful or prohibited? As for those firmly grounded in knowledge, such issues are not confusing to them and they know into which category it goes.

As for the clearly lawful, this includes, for example, eating all clean and good foods, such as plants, fruit and cattle, and drinking all clean and lawful beverages. It also includes wearing the clothing one needs, whether from cotton, linen, wool, or other materials. Likewise, marriage done in the lawful manner. And, acquiring wealth lawfully, such as with a valid contract like buying and selling, inheritance, gifts, one's share in spoils of war and the like.

As for the clearly prohibited, this includes eating dead (or improperly killed) animals, blood drained from an animal or anything from a pig. It also includes drinking of alcohol, marrying in an unlawful way or wearing silk (for men, specifically). Examples of illicit acquisition of wealth include: from interest, gambling, proceeds from what was not lawful to sell, property taken by theft, intimidation or deception, etc.

As for the unclear matters, they are, for example, some of the things in which there is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to whether it is lawful or prohibited. Among objects, this could include horses, mules, donkeys and lizards. Also, it could include the drinking beverages in which there are some different opinions, such as some juices which contain a tiny amount of alcohol, but where it would take a huge amount to actually reach intoxication, or wearing materials in which they differed, such as skins of wild predators, etc. This is the meaning with which the "unclear matters" was interpreted by Ahmad, Is-Haq and others among the imams.(1)

The conclusion from all of this is that: Allah, Most High, sent the book to his Messenger. He clarified therein for this nation all that we need in terms of the lawful and the prohibited, as Allah said:

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(1) There is nothing in the law which is "unclear" in any absolute sense. The lack of clarity is relative and may be unclear to some but utterly clear and well-defined to others. When something appears to be unclear by nature, but upon intense investigation it will either become clear and well-defined as understood by some of the scholars or it will be found to be not among those things with which the law of Islam is concerned in the first place (المباحات).

{… and we sent down to you the Book, a clarification of all things…} An-Nahl:89

Mujahid and others said about this: “a clarification of all that they have been ordered to do or prohibited from doing.” And, at the end of An-Nisaa, in which Allah clarified many rulings regarding economics and sexual relations, Allah said:

{…Allah clarifies for you lest you go astray and Allah has complete knowledge of all things} An-Nisaa: 186

Then, Allah assigned the clarification of whatever the people found in any way unclear in Allah’s book to his Messenger, as He said:

{… and we sent down the reminder to you that you should clarify to the people what was sent down…} An-Nahl: 44

Finally, the Prophet was not taken from us until he had completed for this nation Allah’s final religion. Thus, Allah communicated this verse to him at Arafat shortly before his death:

{…On this day I have perfected for you your way (religion), completed My favor upon you and accepted for you Islam as your way (religion).} Al-Ma’idah: 3

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And, the Prophet said: "**I have left you upon something clear and bright. Its night is like its day. None are inclined away from the truth except the doomed.**"[2] Abu Dharr said, "Allah's Messenger passed away leaving no bird flapping its wings in the sky but that he had mentioned to us knowledge regarding it."[3]

Imam Ahmad defined an "unclear matter" (شبهة) as a status between lawful and prohibited – i.e., between the absolutely lawful and the absolutely prohibited. He said, "Whoever avoids them has maintained the purity (innocence) of his religion." Other times, he described it as a comingling of the lawful and the prohibited. And he derived from this certain specific rulings. For example, doing business with someone whose wealth is a mixture of lawful and prohibited. If most of his wealth is prohibited in nature (e.g., from illicit sources), Ahmad advised to avoid doing any business with him except for something very minor. But, if most of his wealth is lawful, it is lawful and fine to do business with him, eat from his sustenance and the like. If the matter is generally unclear, then this overall is a *shubha* (unclear matter) and the dictates of pious caution are to stay away.

A group among the first generations deemed it lawful to eat the food of someone whose wealth is prohibited as long as you have no knowledge that the actual items you are eating are such. It is soundly narrated from Ibn Mas'ood that he was asked about a neighbor who deals in interest openly and finds no difficulty with illicit wealth – if he invites me to a meal, should I go? Ibn Mas'ood answered, "Yes, go to his invitation. For you is the satisfaction of the meal and upon him is the burden [of his sins]."

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(2) Ahmad, 4/126; Ibn Majah, #43; Sh. Al-Albaniy rated it authentic (sahih) in his "Sahih Ibn Majah" from the narration of Al-'Irbaadh ibn Saariya.

(3) Ahmad reported it (5/153) via "some elders from Taim" from Abu Dharr. This is a broken chain as you can see.

Ahmad rated this narration authentic (sahih) to Ibn Mas'ood, but this may be in conflict with something else he narrated from the same source wherein he said, "Sin is that which bothers the conscience."

In any case, if a specific item is known to be of the unlawful – meaning it was acquired in an unlawful manner – then it is forbidden to partake of it. Consensus in this matter has been reported by Ibn Abdul-Barr and others.

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But, it has been narrated from Ibn Sireen regarding a man who gains wealth from interest or a man who gains wealth from gambling (meaning should you in turn obtain said wealth from him via some lawful transaction such as selling or invitation to a meal), and he answered, "There is no problem with that." This was reported by Al-Khallaal with an authentic chain of narration (to Ibn Sireen).

The Prophet's statement: "**So, whoever is wary of the unclear matters has maintained the innocence of his religion and his dignity. But, whoever dwells in the unclear matters, falls into the prohibited:**"

This divides people with regard to the unclear matters into two groups:

The first: They are wary of these matters and keep away from them, maintaining distance between themselves and such matters because of the lack of clarity and doubt they involve. Such people have maintained the purity and innocence of their religion and their dignity.(4)

(4) In this we see the legality of staying away from both the prohibited and the unclear for one's reputation, even though no one can be rewarded for staying away from something except with that intention. (Meaning staying away from something because of social pressure is not an intention which can bring a reward.) There is no harm if the social motivation is stronger than the religious motivation when it comes to [urging people to] stay away from the prohibited. As for acts of worship, the motivation must be a religious motivation. If that is accompanied by a social motivation along with it, there is no harm in that.

The meaning of "maintaining the innocence of" (استبرأ) is: seeking that his religion and his dignity (or reputation) be free of any shortcoming or flaw. From this we understand that whoever practices the unclear matters has exposed himself to criticism. This is as some of the first generations have said, "Whoever exposes himself to accusations, let him not blame those who think ill of him."

The Second: These are people who enter into the unclear matters, knowing that to him they are unclear. About this, the Prophet's words: "…**falls into the prohibited,**" and this can come about in two ways:

1. He engages in the unclear matters – even though he believes them to be among the unclear matters. This then becomes a gateway to his committing the actual prohibited. His taking the former lightly leads to his taking the latter lightly, step by step.
2. Another may engage in the unclear matters, knowing and believing them to be so, but he doesn't know if it is lawful or prohibited. So, there is no guarantee that this unclear matter may in reality be among the prohibited, so he has already fallen into the prohibited without knowing that he has done so.

As for one who does something which the people consider among the unclear matters based on his knowledge that it is in fact lawful, there is nothing negative upon him. But, if he fears criticism from the people for it, staying away from it is more conducive to innocence in his dignity and so it is good. This is like the statement of the Prophet to one who saw him standing with [his wife] Safiya: "**She is Safiya bint Huyaiy.**"(5)

(5) Bukhari, #2035; Muslim, #2175

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Anas went out one day for the Friday service. He saw the people had prayed and were returning. He felt ashamed and went to a place where no one could see him. And, he said, "Whoever is not ashamed before the people is not ashamed before Allah."(6)

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "…**He is like a shepherd who grazes his animals right on the boundaries of a forbidden sanctuary. He is always on the brink of [any of his animals] slipping into it.**

Surely, every king has his forbidden zones. And verily, the forbidden zone of Allah is what He has prohibited…"

The Prophet has given us this analogy of one who engages in the unclear matters – and that his falling into the clearly forbidden is not far behind. He compared the clearly forbidden to a preserve which is guarded and protected by a king who doesn't allow any others to enter it. So, Allah is the guardian of everything He has prohibited and he forbid his slaves to come near. In the analogy, one who makes a habit of grazing his animals right on the boundary of the preserve is almost sure to slip into it – and violate the king's rules by grazing his animals there – one day. Likewise is one who goes beyond the clearly lawful and makes a habit of engaging in the unclear matters. He is so very close to the clearly prohibited. He is very likely to slip sooner or later into the clearly prohibited. From this we understand: It is best to stay far away from the clearly prohibited and to have a barrier, distance or space between it and yourself.

At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah reported, from the narration of Abdullah ibn Yazeed from the Prophet, who said, "**No one will attain being among the**

(6) At-Tabaraani in "Al-Awsat," 8/87; Al-Haithamiy said in "Al-Majma," "There is a group of narrators who I don't know."

truly vigilant (or pious) until he stays away from something in which there is no harm out of fear of that in which there is harm."[7]

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Al-Hassan said, "Piety continued to affect the people of piety until they left much of the lawful out of fear of the prohibited."

Sufyan ibn 'Uyaina said, "No slave will attain true faith until he places between himself and the prohibited a barrier of [some of] the lawful – until he steers clear of sin and of the unclear matters."

[Divider]

Next, the Prophet said: "**And, in every body there is a piece of flesh which, when it is wholesome the whole body is wholesome but when it is spoiled, the whole body becomes spoiled. Verily! It is the heart.**"

This indicates that the righteousness of the actions of the slave, his avoiding of the prohibited, and his avoidance of the unclear matters is in accordance to the righteousness of the actions of his heart:

If his heart is sound and contains nothing but love for Allah, love for all that which is loved by Allah, fear of Allah and fear of falling into anything disliked by Allah, then all the actions of his body members will be righteous and this will result in the avoidance of all prohibited things and the avoidance of the unclear matters for fear of falling into the clearly prohibited.

(7) At-Tirmidhi, #2451; Ibn Majah, #4215, from the narration of Atiya As-Saadiy (a Companion), but its chain is weak.

I say: Perhaps the author mentioned this hadith here as from the narration of Abdullah ibn Yazeed instead of attributing it to Atiya As-Saadiy in order to make clear the weakness of the hadith. This is because Abdullah ibn Yazeed is known to be weak. In fact, Imam Ahmad said, "His hadith are forgeries." And, Al-Jawzjaniy said: "His hadith are abominable." See, "Mizaan Al-I'tidaal" by Adh-dhahabiy, 2/526. And another thing: Abdullah ibn Yazeed has no mention whatsoever in any of the six main books of hadith except for this one narration. See "Tahdheeb Al-Kamaal" by Al-Mizziy, 16/319. And Allah knows best.

If, on the other hand, the heart is corrupted (spoiled) and is overrun with following desires and whims and seeking gratification, even if it is in something disliked by Allah, all of the actions of his body members will be spoiled and they will gravitate to every disobedience and unclear matters according to the desires of the heart.

Nothing will benefit anyone before Allah except a sound heart, as Allah, Most High said:

{On the day when neither wealth nor sons will avail anything. Only whoever comes to Allah with a sound heart.} Ash-Shu'araa: 88-89

A sound heart is one free from all detested illnesses. It is a heart containing nothing but love for Allah, love for whatever Allah loves, fear of Allah and fear of whatever takes him far from Allah.

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So, there is no soundness of the heart until it is filled with awareness and knowledge of Allah, of His greatness and love, fear, awe, hope, and reliance on Allah. When the heart is filled with those, this is the [only] true monotheism. This is the real meaning of "There is no deity except Allah." There is no soundness of the heart until its deity which it deifies (worships and obeys), knows, loves, and fears is none other than Allah alone, with no partner.

Al-Hassan said: "I have never looked with my eyes, spoken with my tongue, struck with my hand nor rose to my feet until I first consider whether it is obedience or disobedience. If it is obedience, I proceed but if it is disobedience, I hold back."

Those people, (our righteous predecessors) when their hearts became pure and contained no further desire for other than Allah, all of the actions of their body members did not move except for Allah's sake and toward that which pleases him – and Allah knows best.



Hadith Number 7

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From Tameem Ad-Daariy that Allah's Messenger said: "**Religion is sincerity.**" He said it three times. We asked the Prophet, "To whom, Oh Messenger of Allah? He replied, "**To Allah, to His Book, to His Messenger, to the leaders of the Muslims and to their general public.**"

Al-Hafidh Abu Na'eem said: "This is a very important hadith." And, Muhammad ibn Aslam At-Toosiy mentioned that it constitutes "One of the fourths of the religion."

At-Tabarani reports, from the narration of Hudhaifa ibn Al-Yamaan from the Prophet who said, "**Whoever is not concerned with the affairs of the Muslims is not one of them. And, whoever does not sleep and wake in sincerity to Allah, his Messenger, his Book, to his Imam and to the generality of the Muslims is not one of them.**"(1)

Al-Khattabiy said: "Sincerity (النصيحة) is a word (often translated "advice") which expresses a number of meanings. It means wishing all that is good for its object. And the origin of this word in the Arabic language means purity. A verb from the same root is used for honey when it is filtered and all traces of wax removed.

(1) He is one of the great Imams of following the Sunnah of the Prophet, retainer of immense knowledge and a leading scholar of Islam, Muhammad ibn Aslam At-Toosiy – in spite of the persecution he faced for Allah's sake. He lived a life of humility and worship. He passed away after Imam Ahmad by one year in the year 242 after the migration in Neesaboor, may Allah have mercy on him.

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Abu Amr ibn As-Salaah said: "An-Naseeha is a very broad term. It encompasses the doer exerting himself toward the object of his 'sincerity' with all manner of good and benefit – in both intention and action."

So, sincerity to Allah means: pure monotheism and ascribing to Him only all attributes of perfection and majesty, along with exalting Allah far above any concept opposite to that (anything indicative of imperfection or flaw). And that you should carefully avoid any disobedience of him and that you should stand firm in obedience to Him and utmost devotion to Him. You must love who you love for Allah's sake and only hate for Allah's sake, wage *Jihad* against those who oppose and reject Allah and other similar actions. Also, to call others to all of this and encourage them in that direction.

Sincerity to the book of Allah means: Belief in it, honoring it, defending it, reciting it as it should be recited and binding oneself to its orders and its prohibitions. You should understand its knowledge and its parables, contemplate its signs and call others to it. You must defend it against the extremists who distort it and the attacks of the atheists.

Sincerity to Allah's Messenger means: It is similar to the previous. To believe in him and in what he brought. To respect and honor him. To hold fast to obedience to him and the revival and preservation of his Sunnah (way). To collect and spread the knowledge he brought. To be an enemy to whoever bears enmity to him and to have allegiance to all those who have allegiance to him. To take his lofty character traits as your own as much as you can and his manners as your manners. Finally to love his family members and his Companions.

Sincerity to the imams (leaders) of the Muslims means: To aid them and assist them in the way of the Truth. To obey them therein and remind them of it. To bring to their attention to any shortcomings gently and with respect,

and to avoid attacking them. Finally, praying to Allah to grant them every success and keep them on the correct way.

Sincerity to the masses of the Muslims means: Guiding them to what will benefit them. Teaching knowledge of both the religion and [beneficial] worldly matters. Concealing their faults and shortcomings. Aiding them against any who bear enmity toward them unjustly and protecting them. Avoiding any lying or deception of any of them, avoiding having any envy of anyone and to learn to love for another what you love for yourself and to dislike for another what you dislike for yourself. And other matters of like nature. This concludes what was mentioned by Abu Amr ibn As-Salaah.

[Divider]

Also part of a Muslim's sincerity toward the Muslims at large: Seeking to keep all harm and unpleasantness away from them. Giving to the poor. Teaching the ignorant. Rectifying one who strays from the truth in word or deed – and doing so with gentleness and compassion to bring them back to what is right. Having compassion and understanding in commanding them with all that is right and good and forbidding them all that is wrong and bad. To love getting them out of a state of moral corruption, even if it means worsening your own condition in worldly matters. As some of the early generations said: "I wish that all creation would obey Allah, even if my flesh had to be ripped off with cutters."

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Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz used to say, "If only I governed you with Allah's Book and you in turn acted according to it. [I wish that] every time I conducted your affairs according to a Sunnah, a piece of my body fell off – until the last thing is the exit of my soul."

One of the greatest forms of sincerity is to be sincere to one who sought your advice on some matter, as the Prophet said: "**When anyone seeks the advice of any of you, let him be completely sincere therein.**"(2)

Al-Fudhail ibn 'Ayaadh said, "He among us who reached success did not reach it with a lot of prayer and fasting. Rather, he reached it with generosity, purity of heart (toward others) and sincerity to the whole nation."

Ibn Al-Mubaarak was asked, "Which deed is best?" He answered, "Sincerity to Allah."

Ma'mar said, "He used to say: Those most sincere to you are those who fear Allah most regarding you."

The first generations used to say that whenever they wished to advise or admonish anyone, they did so privately, such that some of them said: "Whoever advised his brother just between the two of them, this is sincerity (of advice). But, whoever advises him in front of others has only put him down."

Al-Fudhail said: "A believer conceals and advises. The corrupt one exposes and scandalizes."

Abdul-Aziz ibn Abi Ruwwad said: "The people who came before you, when they saw something bad from their brother, used to command him with compassion and they were rewarded for ordering and prohibiting. But these people tear into their brother, only make him angry and expose his secrets."

(2) Ahmad, 4/256; and there is some doubt about its authenticity. Anyway, its meaning is covered in a hadith from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet, who said, "**The rights of every Muslim over every other Muslim are six...**" and he mentioned among them, "**and when he seeks his advice, that he be completely sincere therein.**" Muslim, #2162

Hadith Number 8



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From Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that Allah's Messenger said: "**I have been ordered to fight the people until they bear witness that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, establish the prayer and pay the Zakat. So, when they do that, their lives and their wealth are protected from me, except for the right of Islam, and their account is up to Allah most high.**" Bukhari and Muslim

The meaning of his statement "**except for the right of Islam:**"

This phrase is in the version reported by Bukhari but not that of Muslim.

However, this meaning has been reported from the Prophet from a variety of chains:

In Sahih Bukhari from the narration of Anas from the Prophet who said: "**I have been ordered to fight the people until they bear witness that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's slave and Messenger. When they bear witness that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, pray our prayer, face our prayer-direction and eat animals slaughtered our way, their lives and property are forbidden to us, except for its right.**"[1]

And, Muslim reports, from the narration of Malik Al-Ashja'iy from his father who said, I heard Allah's Messenger say, "**Whoever said: There is no deity except Allah, and rejected all that is worshipped beside Allah,**

(1) Bukhari, #382

his life and his wealth is sanctified (forbidden), and his account is up to Allah."[2]

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It is narrated from Sufyan ibn 'Uyainah that he said, "This was in the early days of Islam before the mandating of prayer, fasting, Zakat and migration (hijrah)." This narration is very weak. There is even doubt about its validity to Sufyan. On the other hand, the narrators of the above hadith accompanied the Prophet in Al-Madinah and some of them only entered Islam in its later days.

[Divider]

Then, the Prophet said, "…**their lives and their wealth are protected from me:**"

This shows that as of this statement, he was ordered to fight against those who reject Islam – and all of this is after the migration to Al-Madinah. And it is known without doubt that the Prophet accepted any and all who came to him and wished to be a Muslim, based on the testimony of faith alone, and their lives were protected by that and they were considered full citizens of the new state. Also, the Prophet condemned Usama ibn Zaid for killing one who had said "There is no deity except Allah" in the heat of battle. (That man had killed many Muslims in that battle and only testified to faith when he was overpowered.) The Prophet condemned that very strongly.[3]

Muhammad ibn Nasr Al-Maroozy reported – but with a very weak chain of narration – from Anas, that he said, "The Prophet did not accept any who wished to enter Islam unless they established the prayer and paid the Zakat." This is not authenticated. Even if it is authentic, the meaning would be that

(2) Muslim, #23

(3) Bukhari, #4269; Muslim, #96

the Prophet would not continue to acknowledge the Islam of anyone who abandoned the prayer and Zakat.

From this, we see how to reconcile the words of the various hadith in this chapter. The testimony of faith in and of itself protects anyone who pronounces it and he becomes thereby a Muslim. Then, assuming he establishes the prayer, pays the Zakat and abides by the rulings of Islam, then he has all the rights of every Muslim and all of their obligations as well. However, if he negates any of those after their pledge and if they are a group, they are to be fought. It is legitimate to physically fight against any faction which withholds from making the prayer or paying the Zakat. This is reflected in what Allah said:

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{…But if they repent, establish the prayer and pay the Zakat, leave them free…} At-Tauba: 5, and

{Then, if they repent, establish the prayer and pay the Zakat, then they are your brothers in religion…} At-Tauba: 11

And, it is known about the Prophet, that when he was about to invade an area, he waited until morning. If he heard the call to prayer, he would retreat and not attack that area.(4)

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**and his account is up to Allah:**"

This means that the testimony of faith, along with establishing the prayer, protects the individual and his wealth in this world, unless he commits a crime, the punishment of which involves his life or property. As for the hereafter, his reckoning is up to Allah. If he was truthful, Allah will put him in

(4) Bukhari, #610; Muslim, #382, from the narration of Anas.

Paradise. But, if he was lying, that means he was among the hypocrites, and they are in the lowest depths of the fire.

This was cited as evidence by those favoring accepting the repentance of a *zindeeq*(5), (i.e., a hypocrite when he claims he has returned to Islam), who do not see any death penalty for him after having revealed his rejection and enmity to Islam (this is the view of the majority). This was, in fact, how the Prophet himself dealt with the hypocrites. He treated them as any Muslim in accordance with their apparent and outward behavior though he knew in many cases of their concealed enmity, treachery and rejection. This was also the opinion of Ash-Shafi'i, Ahmad, according to one report, and Al-Khattabi attributed it to the majority of scholars.(6) And, Allah knows best.

(5) This word *zindeeq* is of Persian origin. They were the followers of Disaan, then Maniy and then Mazdak. They accepted that light created good and darkness created evil and didn't acknowledge any other creator beside those two. These original *zanaadiqa* (plural of *zindeeq*) were killed and exiled by the Persians before Islam. Then, this word "*zindeeq*" was used to mean rejecters and hypocrites who though initially concealing it, later showed openly their rejection of Islam and enmity toward the Muslims.

(6) Malik was of the opinion that their repentance should not be accepted and this is another opinion reported from Ahmad.

I say: What is meant is that his repentance is not accepted in this world (after repeatedly displaying enmity toward Islam and Muslims) and that the death sentence should be carried out. As for the hereafter, Allah is surely capable of forgiving all sins – if and when the slave was sincere in his repentance. {Grace from Allah and a great favor, and Allah is Knowing, Wise.} Al-Hujuraat: 8. For more discussion regarding the repentance of a *zindeeq*, see "Sharh An-Nawawi 'alaa Sahih Muslim", 1/207.

Hadith Number 9

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From Abu Huraira who said, I heard Allah's Messenger say: "**Whatever I have prohibited you, avoid it completely and whatever I have ordered you to do, do it to the extent of your ability. Those who came before you were only destroyed by too many questions and differing regarding their Prophets."** Bukhari and Muslim

This exact wording is from Muslim. In another version reported by Muslim, the context of the remark is included: from the narration of Abu Huraira who said: The Prophet addressed us (in a sermon) and said, "**Oh people! Allah has prescribed for you the Pilgrimage, so make the Pilgrimage.**" A man said: Every year, O Messenger of Allah? The Prophet said, "**If I were to say yes, it would become obligatory and you would not be able!**" Then, the Prophet said, "**Leave me whenever I have left you. The only thing which destroyed those who came before you was too many questions and their differing over their Prophets. So, when I order you with something, do of it what you are able and when I prohibit you something, avoid it completely.**"[1]

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**Leave me whenever I have left you. The only thing which destroyed those who came before you was too many questions and their differing over their Prophets.**"

(1) Muslim, #1337

This shows the undesirability of excessive questions and condemnation of same. And it indicates that once you busy yourself with following what is ordered and avoiding what is prohibited, this will occupy your time and energy in lieu of needless questions or debates. "**So, when I order you with something, do of it what you are able, and when I prohibit you something, avoid it completely.**"

So, the thing that every Muslim should concern him or herself with first and foremost is searching for everything that has come from Allah and His Messenger. Then, a Muslim should struggle and strive to understand all of that. Then, to believe all of it if it is among the informative knowledge. If it is among the practical (or directive) knowledge then, a Muslim should exert his/her maximum effort to do all that they are able of what is ordered and to avoid completely what is forbidden. His/her ambition and efforts should be directed in this way before all others.

If, on the other hand, one's efforts are directed – upon hearing of an order or a prohibition – toward postulating theoretical variations which might occur and might never occur, this becomes part of what was condemned in this hadith. And, it distracts and impedes one from being in earnest in following [what came from Allah and his Messenger] and obeying.

A man once asked Ibn Umar: What is your opinion about greeting the black stone [when circling the Kaaba]? He answered: "I saw the Prophet greeting it and I saw him kiss it." Then the man said: What if I am unable? What if the crowd is too intense? Ibn Umar replied: "Take your 'what if' and send it to Yemen! I saw the Prophet greeting it and I saw him kiss it." Reported byAt-Tirmidhi.(2)

Ibn Umar meant by this that he should have no other desire than to follow the example of the Prophet and there is no need to speculate about being unable to do so, making things difficult before that even happens. This will only serve to weaken one's resolution to follow [the Prophet's example].

(2) In fact, it was also reported by Bukhari, #1611 as well as At-Tirmidhi as mentioned by the author, #861.

Seeking detailed knowledge of the law (*fiqh*) and asking about knowledge is only praiseworthy and worthwhile when it is for practical application, not when it is for sophistry, debate, and argument.

For this reason, many of the Companions and the Followers disliked asking about any anything which had not actually come to pass – and they would not answer such questions.

When Zaid ibn Thabit was asked about something, he would ask, "Did it happen?" If the answer was no, he would say, "Then leave it until it does."

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Masrooq reports: "I asked Ubayy ibn Kaab about something and he said, 'Has it happened?' I answered that no, it hadn't. He replied, "Then give me rest until it occurs. Then, if it occurs I will strive my best to give you my best answer."

Ash-Sha'biy said: "Ammar was asked a question. He asked: 'Has it come to pass?' They said that no it hadn't. He said: 'Then leave us until it happens. When it happens, we will analyze it for you.'"

Ibn Wahb said: "I heard Malik say: 'Arguing about knowledge hardens the hearts and causes hatred.'"

Al-Maimooniy said: "I heard Abu Abdullah (meaning Imam Ahmad) being asked a question and he replied: 'Has this situation come up? Have you been tested with it yet?'"

In summation, anyone who follows the Prophet's order in this hadith and desists from what he prohibited us will remain busy with that and not be distracted by less useful matters. He will be successful in this world and in the hereafter. But, one who disregards this and becomes obsessed with his inclinations and what he sees as best, will fall into what is being cautioned against here by the Prophet. This happened to the People of the Book (Chris-

tians and Jews) before us who were ruined by too many purely theoretical questions and their differences regarding their prophets – instead of following and obeying their prophets as they were commanded.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**So, when I order you with something, do of it what you are able and when I prohibit you something, avoid it completely:**"

Some of the scholars said: "We understand from this that a prohibition is stronger than an order. This is because in the case of the prohibition, there was no permission (because of "ability") given to commit any of it. Orders, on the other hand were restricted to that which is within one's ability to do it."(3)

This is similar to another thing some of them said: "Righteous acts are performed by the righteous and by the corrupt, but acts of disobedience are only avoided by the truthful."

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Aisha said: "Anyone who wants to out-do those most earnest in efforts [to be good], stay away from all sins."

Al-Hassan said: "No worshipper has performed any act of worship superior to staying away from what Allah has prohibited him."

It appears that what has been reported in terms of preferring avoiding what is forbidden to performing what is commanded is referring in the latter case to the voluntary acts of obedience, not the obligatory. This is supported

(3) TN: This is because NOT doing something is the default and doesn't require special effort. Thus, it is not limited by ability. Doing something on the other hand requires a decision and a will to do it. Everyone can NOT do something, but not everyone can do each and every action.

by Ibn Umar's statement: "Stopping a penny from [being used in] the forbidden is superior to spending hundreds of thousands in Allah's path."

Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz said: "Piety is not standing the night in prayer nor fasting the day or a combination of those. Rather, piety is fulfilling all that Allah has made obligatory and avoiding all that He has prohibited. If there are additional deeds in addition to that, they constitute good on top of good." (Or, as he said.)

In general, all of their words indicate that avoiding the forbidden – even a small amount of it – is preferable (and more important) than performing many voluntary good deeds. This is because the first is obligatory while the latter is voluntary (beyond the obligatory).(4)

(4) Committing forbidden acts and acts of worship each negate the other in accordance to the magnitude or severity of each. So retaining the benefit (reward) of the obligatory acts of obedience is more appropriate than performing the obligations along with the forbidden. This is because if the forbidden acts can destroy the obligations, then their ability to negate the voluntary good deeds is even clearer.

Hadith Number 10

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From Abu Huraira who said, “Allah’s Messenger said: ‘**Verily, Allah is good and He only accepts that which is good (pure). And Allah has commanded the believers with that which He commanded His Messengers, saying: {Oh Messengers! Eat from that which is good and pure and act righteously.}** **Al-Mu’minoon: 51. And He (Most High) said: {Oh you who believe! Eat from the good and pure things we have provided for you.}’** **Al-Baqarah: 172. Then he (the Prophet) mentioned a man on a long journey, worn out and dusty, who raised his hands to the heavens saying: ‘Oh Lord! Oh Lord!’ But, his food was from the forbidden, his drink was from the forbidden, his clothing was from the forbidden and his sustenance was from the forbidden – So, how could that ever be answered?”** Muslim

“Good” (الطيب) here means that which is clean, lawful, and pure. With regard to Allah, it means that He is exalted above any shortcoming or flaw whatsoever. Just as He said: {Good women are for good men and good men are for good women and these are made innocent of whatever [people] say.} An-Nur: 26.(1) The intended folks here are those innocent of and above sin and its harmful effects and its stain.

(1) TN: In which Allah used human plural forms of the same word.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**and He only accepts that which is good (pure):**"

The meaning is that Allah does not accept anything given in charity except that which is lawful and clean. It has also been said that the meaning here is more general than that. This means that Allah does not accept any action or deed except for that which is clean, pure, and free from anything that would taint its status as a good deed purely for Allah's sake, such as ostentation or pride. And, if material wealth is involved, it must be clean and lawful. This word for "good" can apply to deeds, statements or beliefs. All of these can be divided into good (طيب) and unclean (خبيث).

One of the most important foundations for the actions of a believer to be good is the purity of his food which he consumes. From this, his actions can be pure. In this hadith, there is an indication that good deeds are not accepted unless the individual nourishes himself from what is lawful and that consuming forbidden things nullifies one's deeds and prevents their acceptance as such. For he said:

"Verily Allah is good and He only accepts that which is good (pure). And Allah has commanded the believers with that which He commanded His Messengers, saying: {Oh Messengers! Eat from that which is good and pure and act righteously.} Al-Mu'minoon: 51. And He (Most High) said: {Oh you who believe! Eat from the good and pure things we have provided for you.}" Al-Baqarah: 172

The meaning here is that all of the Prophets and Messengers, along with their nations, were commended to eat only from good and pure sources – which means that which was lawful under divine law – and to act righteously. So, as long as their sustenance was from lawful sources, their righteous deeds could be accepted. But, if their sustenance was from unlawful sources, how then could their deeds be accepted?

So this is like what was mentioned after that about the supplication of the traveler – how could such a supplication be accepted? This is an example of deeds not being accepted or rewarded when one's sustenance was from illegal sources.

Wuhaib ibn Al-Ward said: "Even if you were to stand as firm as this pillar, that would not benefit you in the least unless you look closely at what enters your belly – is it lawful or unlawful?"

As for giving charity from illicit wealth, it cannot be accepted, as was mentioned in Sahih Muslim from the narration of Ibn Umar, from the Prophet, who said, "**Allah does not accept any prayer without purification (ablution), nor any charity from embezzled wealth.**"(2)

It is narrated from Abi Ad-Dardaa' and Yazid ibn Abi Maisara that they compared someone who gained wealth illicitly and then gave it in charity to one who stole money from an orphan to buy clothing for a widow.

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Al-Hassan said, "Oh you giving charity to a poor person out of compassion, have compassion first on those you oppressed."

So, if the ruler and his appointees take wealth from the treasury which they should not have taken and then give it in charity, free slaves, build a mosque or do other things which benefit the people, what is narrated from Ibn Umar regarding it is that it is like one who steals from people by intimidation and then gives charity from what he stole. He said something similar to Abdullah ibn Aamir the governor of Basra. The people were gathered at the time of his death. They were praising him for his good deeds and generosity, but Ibn Umar was silent. Then, they asked him to speak and he

(2) Muslim, #224

narrated for him the hadith of the Prophet: "**Allah does not accept charity from embezzled wealth.**" Then, Ibn Umar said, "And you were in charge of Basra."

Asad ibn Musa said in his book "Kitaab Al-War," Ibn Aamir said to Ibn Umar: "Do you not see these mountain passes that we have made easy and the water sources that we have created? Will we be rewarded for all this?" Ibn Umar replied: "Did you not know that one foul thing cannot expiate another foul thing?"

Ibn Umar also said to Ibn Aamir when he asked him about the freeing of slaves: "Your analogy is like a man who stole a pilgrim's camel and then made *jihad* upon that [stolen] camel. Do you think that will be accepted from him?"

On the other hand, if there is a just ruler who gives the people all of their rights and then he builds for them what they need in terms of mosques, schools, hospitals and the like, that is lawful and accepted.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**Then he (the Prophet) mentioned a man on a long journey, worn out and dusty, who raised his hands to the heavens saying: "Oh Lord! Oh Lord!" But, his food was from the forbidden, his drink was from the forbidden, his clothing was from the forbidden and his sustenance was from the forbidden – So, how could that ever be answered?**:"

Here, the Prophet is describing some of the etiquettes or requirements of supplication and the factors which result in it being answered and those which prevent its acceptance.

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The Prophet mentioned four things which result in a supplication being answered:

First: A long journey. A long journey in and of itself is something which favors a prayer being answered, as mentioned in a hadith from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet who said, "**Three prayers are answered without doubt: the prayer of the oppressed, the prayer of a traveler and the prayer of a father for his son.**" This was reported by Abu Daud, Ibn Majah and At-Tirmidhi. And, in the version reported by the latter: "**the prayer of a father against his son**."

When a journey is long and difficult, there is an even greater chance of prayers being accepted. This is because in such a situation of difficulty, strange surroundings and hardships, it is expected that the soul will become humble and conscious of its utter need for its Creator – and this humility and focus is one of the greatest reasons for prayers to be accepted.

Second: The visible signs of hardship, such as in his clothing, his hair, and having dust all over him, as in the well-known hadith of the Prophet: "**There may be one with disheveled hair, dusty with two worn garments before whom the people close their doors – but were he to swear to Allah, Allah will fulfill it.**"(3)

Third: Raising one's hands is also one of the etiquettes of supplication which raises hope in it being answered. In a hadith from the narration of Salmaan, from the Prophet who said: "**Verily Allah – Most High – is modest and gracious. When someone raises his two hands toward Him, He does not like to send him back empty-handed and disappointed.**"(4) The

(3) Abu Daud, #1536; At-Tirmidhi, #3448 – and he rated it sound (حسن) as did Sh. Al-Albaaniy in "Sahih At-Targheeb", #3132

(4) Ahamd, 5/438; Abu Daud, #1488; At-Tirmidhi, #3556, Ibn Majah, #3865; Ibn Hibban rated it "sahih", #876; Al-Hakim, 1/497; and Sh. Al-Albaaniy in "Sahih At-targheeb, #1635.

Prophet himself used to raise his hands when making the collective prayer for rain such that his underarms were visible. And he raised his hands in supplication on the day of Badr, asking Allah for victory over the pagans such that his cloak fell from his shoulders.

Various forms of raising the hands in supplication have been narrated from the Prophet:

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One: He would point with his index finger only. It was reported that he did this from the pulpit and when mounting is animal.

Ibn Abbas and others said: This is sincerity in supplication. And, Ibn Sireen said: "When you exalt Allah, point with a single finger."

Another: He would raise both hands with their backs toward Makka which he was facing and the palms facing his face.

Some of the first generations said, "Raising your hands in this manner is humility."

Another: The opposite of the above, i.e., with the palms facing away. Some of them said: "This means to seek Allah's aid and refuge in Him."

Another: He would raise both hands with the palms facing upward and the backs of his hands facing the earth. Ibn Umar, Abu Huraira and Ibn Sireen said: "This is prayer and asking and supplicating to Allah."

Another: The opposite of the above, i.e., with the backs of the hands facing the heavens and the palms facing the earth.

In the two books of Sahih from the narration of Anas that the Prophet made the prayer for rain and the backs of his two hands were facing the heavens. This was also narrated by Ahmad with the words: "He stretched out his hands such that their backs were facing the heavens."

Al-Humaidi said: “This is indeed taking oneself before Allah in supplication.”

Fourth (From the etiquettes of supplication): Being persistent in asking Allah by repeatedly mentioning his Lordship (omnipotence, etc.). This attribute of Allah’s is one of the best things with which to seek an answer to one’s prayers. If you ponder the supplications which are mentioned in the Qur’an, most of them begin with “Yaa Rabb” (يا رب) (which invokes this attribute of Allah), such as: {Our Lord, give us good in this life and good in the hereafter and shield us from the punishment of the fire.} Al-Baqarah: 201. And, {Our Lord! And do not put a burden upon us as you put upon those before us. Our Lord! And do not put upon us that which we have no power to fulfill.} Al-Baqarah: 286

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And, {Our Lord, do not allow sickness into our hearts after you have guided us.} Aal-‘Imraan: 8. There are many other examples like this in the Qur’an.

Malik was asked about one who said in supplication, “Oh Master” (يا سيدي). He answered: “He should say ‘Oh Lord’ as the Prophets all said in their supplications.”

What about that which prevents a response to our prayers?

The Prophet indicated what that is: Involvement in forbidden things – food, drink, clothing, etc. and being sustained by means of the forbidden. The Prophet said to Saad: “**Keep your food pure and good that you may be one whose prayers are answered.**”[5]

(5) Atabarani in “Al-Awsat”, #6491; Al-Haithamiy mentioned it in “Majma’ Az-Zawaa’id”, 10/291 – that At-Tabarani had reported it in “As-Sagheer” but then he said: “But in it (i.e., its chain) are some I don’t know.”

(I said): Even though this hadith is weak, there are ample proofs that Saad ibn Abi Waqqas (the one mentioned) was indeed among those whose supplications were answered. See “Seera

So, eating only the lawful, as well as drinking, wearing, and living on the lawful, is a cause, the effect of which is for one's prayers to be answered.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**So, how could that ever be answered?:**"

This is a question, but the meaning here is amazement and expressing how remote a possibility it is.

So, committing the forbidden can be that which prevents prayers from being answered and likewise neglecting the obligatory acts. Just as acts of obedience bring about one's prayers being accepted and answered. And this is why in the story of the boys who became trapped in a cave, when a rock fell and blocked the entrance, they sought intercession with Allah by means of any good deeds they had done. This caused their prayers to be answered.(6)

From Abu Dharr, who said: "The amount of prayer which suffices along with righteousness is like the amount of salt which suffices along with food."

A'laam An-Nubalaa", 1/111 and after that.

(6) Bukhari, #3465; Muslim, #2743, from the narration of Ibn Umar.

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Some of the first generations said: “Do not feel that the answers to your prayers are slow when you have blocked their road with acts of disobedience.”

A poet expressed this meaning, saying:

We pray to the Deity at every calamity

Then, we forget him when the calamity is removed

How do we hope for answers to our prayers,

When we have blocked their road with sins?

Hadith Number 11

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From Al-Hassan ibn Ali, grandson of Allah's Messenger and the apple of his eye who said, I memorized from the words of Allah's Messenger: **"Leave that which causes you doubt for that which does not cause you any doubt."** Reported by An-Nasaa'i and At-Tirmidhi, who said "hassan, sahih" (an authentic hadith).

The meaning of this hadith goes back to holding back from the unclear issues and being wary of them. That which is fundamentally and clearly lawful does not cause any doubt or hesitation in the heart of the believer. But the unclear matters indeed cause the heart of the believer to fear and be confused which leads to doubt.

Al-Fudhail said: "People think that being pious is harsh. No two options have come before me but that I chose the more difficult of the two! Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt."

Hassaan ibn Abi Sinaan said: "Nothing is easier than [cautious] piety. When you have doubt about anything, just leave it!" This is easy for people like Hassaan!

Hisham bin Hassaan said: "Muhammad ibn Sireen left 40,000 in which you people today see no harm."

Yazid ibn Zurai' abstained from 500,000 from his father's inheritance and did not accept it. His father used to work for the rulers. Yazid used to make baskets and he earned his food from that until the day he died.

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It was reported from Aisha that she was asked about eating from an animal hunted by a person in *ihraam* (i.e., the state of pilgrimage, during which hunting is forbidden). She answered: "It is only a few days! So, whatever causes any doubt, leave it."

Some may use this as evidence for what is known as "avoiding a difference between the scholars,"[1] and that it is the best course because it amounts to avoiding something unclear. But, the most precise among the scholars – from our school and from others – are of the opinion that this is not true, across the board. In some of these questions, there is a clear permission authentically narrated from the Prophet and which has no other text opposing it. So, accepting and acting upon that permission is more appropriate than avoiding it just because that narration of the Prophet's permission may not have reached some of the scholars and so they did rule according to it.

There is something important which should be understood here: Care and attention to avoiding the unclear matters is appropriate for one whose overall state is clear and whose actions overall are righteous and obedient. As for one who falls into various [clearly] forbidden things but then wants to delve in great detail into the unclear matters and seek to avoid them, that is not appropriate for him at all and should be discouraged and condemned. This is as Ibn Umar said about someone from Iraq who asked him about the blood of a mosquito: "They ask me about the blood of a mosquito after having killed Al-Hussain! I heard the Prophet say: **They are my two beautiful flowers fromthisworld**."[2]

(1) TN: This means where there are two positions regarding a permission. For example, if some scholars took the permission to break the fast in Ramadhan while travelling but others held back. Then, not breaking the fast would be the "safer" of the two positions (in case that group was correct) and would be called "avoiding the difference between the jurists."

(2) Bukhari, #3753

Bishr ibn Al-Haarith was asked about a man who was married and his mother ordered him to divorce his wife. He said, "If he is good to his mother in every way and there is nothing left in his goodness to her except divorcing his wife, then he should do so. But, if he is only going to be good to his mother with this divorce and then beat her after that, then no."

Imam Ahmad was asked about a man who bought some root vegetables but with the condition that it includes the basket in which they were wrapped. Ahmad asked, "Who is asking such questions?" They answered that it was Ibrahim ibn Abi Nu'aim. Ahmad said, "OK, if it is Ibrahim ibn Abi Nu'aim then yes, he is appropriate to that."

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Such questions were condemned from those whose state didn't fit. As for those being so very careful in piety to avoid anything doubtful, then in their case such questions are appropriate. And Imam Ahmad used to practice this kind of care and caution of anything doubtful himself.

Once he sent someone to buy ghee for him. He came back with the ghee on a piece of paper. So he ordered him to return the piece of paper to the seller. And, Ahmad would never use any ink from the inkwell of anyone else. Rather, he would always take his own ink with him for his use.

One day a man asked if he could use some of Ahmad's ink. He said, "Write! This is excessive piety."

Another asked him the same permission and he smiled and said: "Neither my piety nor yours is to this extent." He said that out of humility, for he indeed did practice that level of caution himself (in that he would never use the ink of another). He only rejected it from people who had not reached that level - those who took lightly many questionable things and engaged in the unclear matters without any hesitation.

Hadith Number 12

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From Abu Huraira, from Allah's Messenger, who said: "**From the best of anyone's Islam (submission) is leaving that which does not concern him.**" This is a sound (*hassan*) hadith reported by At-Tirmidhi and others.

This hadith was reported by At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah via Al-Awzaa'iy from Qurra ibn Abdur-Rahman, from Az-Zuhri from Abu Salamah from Abu Huraira. At-Tirmidhi said: *ghareeb*, a term which means that it came to us by only this one chain of narration without any other supporting routes.

Our author rated it *hassan* (sound). Ibn Abdul-Barr said: "This hadith is known (narrated) from Az-Zuhri with this chain by various trustworthy narrators of hadith." This statement of his matches our author's judgment of it as *hassan*.

As for the majority of imams, they said: This hadith is not well-preserved with this chain of narration. Rather, it is well-preserved from Az-Zuhri from Ali ibn Hussain from the Prophet but without explicit attribution to the Prophet (so, is authentic up to Az-Zuhri).

Others have stated that it is not authentic except up to Ali ibn Hussain, without explicit attribution. Among those are Ahamd, Yahya ibn Mu'een, Al-Bukhari and Ad-Daaraqutni.

The correct analysis is that it is *mursal*. This means it is authenticated to the final narrator but not explicitly to the Prophet.

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This hadith represents a great fundamental of manners and etiquette.

Its meaning is: Among the best parts of one's truly being in submission to Allah is staying away from words or deeds which do not concern him/her and sticking to actions and statements which do concern him.

The meaning of (يعنيه) or "concerns him" is whatever is appropriate for his care and attention (عناية – from the same root), that which is in line with his priorities, goals or needs. "Care" here means attaching importance to a matter and focusing on it.

When one develops their Islam, that necessitates staying away from that which has no importance to him such as all the forbidden matters, the unclear matters, disliked matters and minor but lawful matters for which he has no need. All of this is not of what concerns a Muslim when his Islam is complete and he attains the level of *ihsaan*.

Most of what is meant by leaving that which doesn't concern you is: guarding your tongue against frivolous talk. Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz said: "Whoever counted what he says among his deeds will not speak much – except for in that which concerns him." It is indeed as he said! Many people don't consider what they say as among their "deeds" (good or bad) and so they just let it out at random and are not careful about it.

Allah negated any good from most of what people talk about among themselves in private conversation, saying: {There is no good in most of their private conversations except for one who enjoins charity or other good deed or engages in the settling of disputes between people.} An-Nisaa: 114

Umar bin Qais Al-Malaa'iy said: "A man passed by Luqman and people were gathered with him. He said (to someone in the gathering): Aren't you with such-and-such tribe? He said: Yes. The man asked: The one who was

grazing animals on such-and-such mountain? He said: Yes, that's me. The man asked: So what has gotten you to what I now see? He said: Speaking the truth and keeping silent about whatever does not concern me."

Some people entered upon one of the Companions on his deathbed – and he was smiling. So, they asked him the reason for his smile. He replied: "There are no deeds in which I trust more than two categories: I used not to speak about what didn't concern me and I kept my heart clean toward every Muslim."[1]

(1) One of the greatest things which truly concerns every person is enjoining all that is good and right and prohibiting all that is evil and wrong, making peace and directing people to what is best. So, it is not correct for anyone to understand the meaning of this hadith in its absolute sense and then thereby remove all forms of reform in contradiction to the many very sound texts which incorporate reform of the individual and society as a vital part of Islam. Rather, what is intended by this hadith is frivolous elements of conversation, looking and doing which do not concern the individual in question. On the contrary, reforming ourselves and our society – even if it involves correcting the actions of individuals is something which deeply concerns us all.

Hadith Number 13

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From Anas ibn Malik, from Allah’s Messenger, who said: “**None of you has believed until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.**”
Reported by Bukhari and Muslim.

This hadith, found in the collections of Muslim and Bukhari, was also reported by Ahmad with slightly different wording as follows: “**A slave will not reach the true faith (or the reality of faith) until he loves for all people all good that he loves for himself.**”

[Divider]

This narration from Ahmad clarifies the one found in Muslim and Bukhari, i.e., that the meaning of negating “belief” is negating is completeness, not negating it altogether if this trait is imperfect.

The meaning is that among the totality of the elements of true faith are that the individual will in fact love for his fellow believer all that he loves for himself and he will hate for anything to befall the other that he would not love himself. If this trait is diminished or absent, then his faith is deficient to that degree.

In Sahih Muslim, from the narration of Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-‘Aas, from the Prophet, who said, “**Whoever would love to be kept away from the fire and to enter Paradise, let death find him believing in Allah and**

the Last Day, and let him only do unto others as he would like them to dountohim."[1]

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Also in Sahih Muslim, from the narration of Abi Dharr who said, the Prophet said: "**Oh Abu Dharr! I see you as weak. And, I love for you what I love for myself. Do not ever be in charge of even two people and do not assume custodianship of any orphan's property.**"[2] The Prophet only forbid him those things because of weakness he saw in him.

Muhammad ibn Waasi' was selling a donkey of his when the buyer said to him: "Are you pleased with it for me? He said: If I was pleased with it, I wouldn't sell it." He was indicating that what he loved for his brother was the same as what he loved for himself.[3]

As for the hadith of Anas – which we are currently discussing – it indicates that the believer rejoices in anything which brings joy to his fellow believer and he wishes for his fellow believer all good that he wishes for himself. All of this arises from the complete purity of the heart from any form of spite, dishonesty or envy. Envy dictates that the envious one hates that anyone should have more good than himself – or even be equal to him in that. This is because of his love of being above others with his wealth and other endowments and to be number one in that. Faith dictates the opposite of all that: that all believers are his partners in whatever good Allah has given – and he doesn't see that as detracting from his blessings in the least.

(1) Muslim, #1844, as part of a longer hadith.

(2) Muslim, #1826

(3) More amazing than that is what Jarir bin Abdullah Al-Bajali did. His servant purchased a horse on his behalf for 300. When Jarir saw it he was impressed but feared that the seller had been exploited. He went to him and informed him that the horse was worth more than 300. He kept insisting on increasing the price until he gave him 800. See "Fath Al-Baaria" by Ibn Hajr, 1/168.

There is evidence among what has been reported that it is not a sin if one dislikes for any other to be more attractive than they are. Imam Ahmad reported, along with Al-Hakim in his "Sahih," from the narration of Ibn Mas'ood who said: "I came to the Prophet and with him was Malik bin Maraara Ar-Rihaawi. As I arrived, he was saying, 'O Allah's Messenger. I have been given the good looks which you see. I dislike that any person should ever look even a little better than I do. Is that not transgression (البغي) on my part?' The Prophet said, '**No. That is not transgression. Rather, transgression is arrogant rejection of the truth – or he said being foolish before the truth – and disrespecting others.**'(4) So, the Prophet ruled out his disliking anyone to be more handsome than himself as being transgression of arrogance. He interpreted arrogance and transgression as meaning rejection of the truth – which means out of arrogance and a refusal to accept it if it conflicts with one's own desires and inclinations.

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In this vein, some of the original generations said: "Humility means acceptance of the truth regardless of who brings it to you, even if a child." So, whoever accepts the truth from any source, young or old and regardless of whether they like the individual or not – is humble. And, whoever rejects the truth out of believing themselves superior to the one bringing it is the arrogant one.

"Disrespecting others" (غمط الناس) means looking down on them and dismissing them and their views. This arises from seeing oneself as superior or perfect and seeing others as inferior and flawed.

(4) Ahmad, 1/385; and Al-Hakim, 4/182; And the hadith was reported by Muslim (#91) without the story and its text is, "**Surely Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty. Arrogance means rejecting the truth and disrespecting others.**"

[Divider]

In general, what is expected of a believer is that they love for all believers all that they love for themselves and that they dislike for them all that they dislike for themselves. Then, if he observes any flaw in the morals or religion of his brother, he exerts every effort to help him improve.

If, on the other hand, an individual knows that Allah has granted him something over others and he informs someone about that for a legitimate Islamic purpose – and speaks about it in the vein of mentioning Allah's favors – while at the same time he sees himself as falling short in showing gratitude for Allah's favor on him, all of that is lawful and there is no sin upon him. Ibn Mas'ood said, "I don't know anyone more knowledgeable about Allah's Book than I. My only wish is that all people should know all that I know about it." Ash-Shafi'i said: "I have wished that the people could all learn this knowledge and none of it would be attributed to me." And 'Utba Al-Ghulaam, when he was breaking a fast, used to say to those who were in the habit of observing his deeds, "Bring some water and dates so that I might break my fast and so you may get the same reward as I do."

Hadith Number 14

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From Abdullah ibn Mas’ood who said, Allah’s Messenger said: “**The blood of a believer is not lawful except for three cases: an adulterer, a life for a life, or one who leaves his religion and turns against the community.**” Reported by Bukhari and Muslim.

In one version reported by Muslim the phrase “leaves his religion” was reported as “leaves Islam” and many hadith have been reported with this meaning. The death penalty for these three offenses is a point of consensus among the Muslims.

[Divider]

As for proven adultery,(1) the prescribed punishment for that is stoning until death by unanimous consent of the Muslims. The Prophet in fact carried out this punishment on [a man named] Ma’iz and [a woman named]

(1) TN: The word translated here as “adultery” means an illicit act of sexual relations committed by one who is or ever has been married. If the same act is committed by one who has never been married, it has a different name, which we translate as “fornication.” This is slightly different (and more specific) than the meaning of the two words in English. As for “proven,” in this case it means one of two things: 1) testimony by four eye witnesses who can testify that they witnessed the actual penetration. (Note that this is practically an impossible condition.) Add to that, if three witnesses testify but a fourth backs out, those three are punished 80 lashes each for “slander;” or, 2) Confession which is insistent and about which there is no doubt.

Al-Ghaamidiya.[2] Also, it was formerly in the Qur'an in a verse which was abrogated by Allah in recitation only while its ruling remained in effect and confirmed by authentic Sunnah (words and deed) of the Prophet himself:

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{The adult man and the adult woman – if they commit adultery – then stone them to death as an example from Allah and Allah is Mighty, Wise.}

This is the verse which was part of the recited Qur'an but was removed by Allah from the final Qur'an[3]

[Divider]

As for "a life for a life," the meaning is that when a responsible individual kills someone without right and intentionally, the penalty for that is death. Allah has indicated this in the Qur'an with His statement: {And we legislated for them therein a life for a life} Al-Ma'idah: 45. And in his statement: {O you who believe, retaliation is prescribed for you for those murdered …} Al-Baqarah: 178

(2) Ma'iz is Ibn Malik Al-Aslamiy. Al-Ghaamidiya is a woman from Ghaamid, a sub-tribe of Juhaina. Their stories are different. The story of Ma'iz is found in both Muslim and Bukhari while the story of Al-Ghaamidiya is only in Muslim. Muslim reports on both stories together in #1695.

(3) This was reported by Ibn Hibban (#4428): From the narration of Zirr ibn Hubaish from Ubayy ibn Kaab and among what was said: Ubayy ibn Kaab said to Zirr ibn Hubaish: How many verses do you find in Sura Al-Ahzaab? He said: There are 73 verses. Ubayy said, "By the One in whom one may swear, it was once the size of Al-Baqarah. And among that which we used to recite was the verse about stoning: { The adult man and the adult woman – if they commit adultery – then stone them to death as an example from Allah and Allah is Mighty, Wise.} The origin of the story is in Sahih (authentic) narrations.

[Divider]

As for the one who leaves his religion and turns on the community (i.e., commits treason), this means: one who leaves Islam, turns away from it and opposes the community. He was exempted from those whose blood is protected because of what was incumbent upon him before he rejected. Islam's ruling is still binding on him after the change. Thus, he is offered the chance to repent and is requested to return to Islam. It is also possible for one to leave his religion and turn on the community while still claiming to accept the testimony of faith and claiming to be a Muslim. For example, if he rejects any of the fundamentals of Islam, curses Allah or his Messenger, rejects belief in any of the angels, any of the Prophets or any of the Divine Books mentioned in the Qur'an – even though he knows the evidence for that. Similarly, one who disrespects the *mushaf* (the physical book in which the Qur'an is written or printed) and throws it in the trash for example. Likewise, one who rejects things known without doubt to be part of Islam such as the prayer – and many other similar things which remove one from the fold of Islam.

There is no difference in any of this between a man and a woman according to most of the scholars.

As for the Prophet's statement, "**one who leaves his religion and turns against the community:**" This indicates that if he repents and returns to Islam, he is not to be killed, because he would no longer be "one who leaves his religion" after returning to it, nor one who has turned against the community.

Hadith Number 15

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From Abu Huraira, that Allah's Messenger said: "**Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him say something good or keep quiet. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honor his neighbor. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honor his guest.**" Bukhkai and Muslim.

As for the Prophet's words: "**Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day,**" then let him do this or that. This indicates that actions mentioned are part of faith.

It was previously mentioned that actions are part of faith. The actions of faith are sometimes related only to the rights of Allah over us, such as performing all the obligatory acts and avoiding all the prohibited ones. One example of that is saying things in which there is good and refraining from all else.

Other times they are related to the rights of our fellow humans over us, such as being gracious to our guest, honoring our neighbors and not causing harm to others. These three things are among what the believer is ordered to do.

First: Saying that which is good and keeping quiet about all else.

It has been reported by At-Tabarani from the narration of Al-Aswad ibn Asram Al-Muhaaribiy who said: "I said, O Messenger of Allah, advise me."

The Prophet said, "**Can you control your tongue?**" I said: "And what do I control if I can't control my own tongue?" The Prophet said, "**Can you control your hand?**" I said: "And what do I control if I can't control my own hands?" Then, the Prophet said, "**Then don't say anything except what is good and don't extend your hand except for something good.**"(1)

It has been narrated that the rectification of the tongue is a component of faith. In the *Musnad* (of Imam Ahmad) from the narration of Anas, from the Prophet, who said: "**The faith of no slave will be upright until his heart is upright and his heart will not be upright until his tongue is upright.**"(2)

Also from the *Musnad* from the narration of Abdullah ibn 'Amr from the Prophet who said: "**He who kept silent succeeded (or stayed safe).**"(3)

In the two books of Sahih from the narration of Abu Huraira, from the Prophet, who said: "**A man will speak a word, the consequences of which are not clear to him, and because of it, he will slip into the hell-fire a distance farther than that between the East and West.**"(4)

Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi reported, from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet, who said, "**A man will utter a word which he deems of no significance but it will cast him into the fire for seventy years.**"(5)

And Bukhari reported, also from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet, who said, "**A man will utter a word pleasing to Allah to which he attaches no importance and will be raised by it several levels and [an-**

(1) At-Tabarani in "Al-Kabeer," #817, and Sh. Al-Albaaniy mentioned it in Al-Silsila As-Sahiha, #1560, mentioned its chain of narration and then said, "It is a sahih (authentic) chain, all of its individual narrators are among the trustworthy.

(2) Ahmad, 3/198, and at the end: "**And no one will enter Paradise from whose mischief his neighbor is not safe.**"

(3) Ahmad, 2/177; At-Tirmidhi, #2501, but in its chain is Abdullah ibn Luhai'a and for this reason, Al-'Iraaqi said in his analysis of the hadith of *Al-Ihyaa* (#2526): At-Tirmidhi reported it via a chain in which there is weakness but it is also reported by At-Tabarani with a good chain.

(4) Bukhari, #6477; Muslim, #2988

(5) Ahmad, 2/236; At-Tirmidhi, #2314; Ibn Majah, #3970, and Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated it sahih in his book "Sahih At-Targheeb wa At-Tarheeb,"#2875

other] slave will utter a word displeasing to Allah to which he attaches no importance and it will throw him down into hell-fire."(6)

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As for the Prophet's words, "**let him say something good or keep quiet:**"

He ordered us to say something good and to remain silent in all else. This indicates that there is no such thing as "neutral" talk where saying it and not saying it are equal. Rather, everything we say is either something good, and so we are ordered to say it or it is not and so we are ordered NOT to say it. There is nothing in between. Allah said: {When the two receivers receive it, sitting on the right and on the left; he never uttered anything without fastidious recorders being right there with him.} Qaf: 17-18. The righteous first generations were unanimous that the one sitting on the right writes the good things and the one on the left writes the bad things. That has also been attributed directly to the words of the Prophet from the narration of Abi Umamah, but its chain is weak.(7) But, it has been reported from the narration of Hudhaifa, attributed to the Prophet, that he said, "**Verily on his right is the scribe who writes all good things.**"(8)

They differed as to whether every single word uttered is recorded or only those things in which there is either reward or punishment? There are two famous opinions on this question.

(6) Bukhari, #1478

(7) At-Tabarani in "Al-Kabeer," 8/191

(8) Reported by Ibn Abi Shaiba (2/364) from the narration of Hudhaifa, in one instance just from Hudhaifa and in another attributed to the Prophet.

(I Said): As for the one reaching only to Hudhaifa, its chain is completely sound like sunlight. But, in the version attributed to the Prophet, we find Abu Bakr ibn 'Ayyash and 'Aasim bin Abi An-Nujaim and they have both been criticized as to the veracity of their memorization, so it remains questionable whether this narration can be attributed directly to the Prophet.

Ali bin Abi Galha reported from Ibn Abbas, that he said: "Everything one utters is recorded, good or bad. Even things like "I ate" or "I went" or "I came." This goes on until Thursday at which time all of what he said and what he did are reviewed. At that time, whatever is good or bad is retained and the rest discarded. This is what is in Allah's statement: {Allah removes whatever He wishes or retains – and He has it all in the master book.}" Ar-Ra'd: 39

And, from Yahya ibn abi Katheer: "A man mounted his donkey but it stumbled and dropped him. He said: 'Wretched donkey!' The one (i.e., angel) on the right said: 'This is not a good deed that I should write it.' The one on the left said: 'It is not a sin that I should write it.' Then, Allah communicated to the one on the left: 'Whatever the one on the right does not write, you must write. So, record among the bad deeds, 'Wretched donkey!''"

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The clear meaning of this is that anything which is not good is bad, even if there is no punishment for it. Some bad deeds may not involve punishment. And they may be negated by a major sin which was avoided. At any rate, the time involved was lost to the doer. It went for nothing and that will contribute to his regret and sorrow (for that time lost in which no good deeds were done) on the Judgment Day – which itself is a type of punishment.

Imam Ahmad reported, along with Abu Daud and An-Nasaa'i, from the narration of Abu Huraira, from the Prophet who said: "**No group of people rises from sitting together without mentioning Allah but they have stood from something like the rotting corpse of a donkey – and it will be for them a regret.**" In the version of At-Tirmidhi, the wording was "**When any group of people sits together without mentioning Allah or sending prayers upon His Prophet, it will be recorded. If Allah wills He will punish them or if He wishes He will forgive them.**"[9]

(9) Ahmad, 2/527; Abu Daud, #4855; At-Tirmidhi, #3380, and he rated it *sahih* as did Sh. Al-Albaaniy in "Sahih Al-Jaami," (#5607, #5750)

Some of the first generations said: "Every son of Adam will be shown the hours of his life. With each hour in which he didn't remember Allah, his soul will rip with regret."

From this we understand that whatever talk which is not specifically good, it is better to keep quiet than to engage in it – except where there is some need or that for which there is no alternative.

Also: that a lot of talk which is not actually necessary hardens the heart, as reported by At-Tirmidhi, from the narration of Ibn Umar, attributed to the Prophet: "**Do not speak a lot without mentioning Allah for too much speaking without mentioning Allah hardens the heart. And, the farthest people from Allah are the hard of heart.**"(10)

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Abu Bakr used to grab his tongue and say, "This has taken me too many places."

Umar said, "Whoever speaks more falls into error more and whoever has many errors gets many sins and for whoever has many sins, the fire is most befitting."

Wahb ibn Munabbih said, "The wise men all agree that the pinnacle of wisdom is keeping quiet."

This is an area of discussion which can go on and on!

In conclusion, the Prophet ordered us to speak that which is good and to keep silent rather than saying that which is not good. So, speaking is not something we are ordered to do in an absolute sense. Nor is keeping silent something we are ordered to do across the board. Rather, it is necessary to speak that which is good and keep silent rather than saying something bad.

(10) At-Tirmidhi, #3411, but in its chain is Ibrahim ibn Abdullah ibn Haatib because of whom Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated the hadith as weak in "As-Silsila Adh-Dhaeefa," #920

The first generations frequently spoke highly of silence as opposed to saying something bad or delving into something that doesn't concern you because of the harm this brings to the individual. And people have a very strong tendency to fall into it. Thus, they used to address this and struggle with themselves in order to keep silent regarding what didn't concern them.

People were discussing with each other in the presence of Al-Ahnaf ibn Qais the question: "Which is preferable, keeping silent or speaking?" Some of them said that keeping silent was preferable. But then Al-Ahnaf said: "Speaking is preferable because the benefit of keeping silent is only for the one keeping silent and doesn't extend to others while speaking that which is good also benefits those who hear it."

One of the scholars said – in the presence of Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz – "One who keeps quiet based on knowledge is like one who speaks based on knowledge." Umar said, "I expect that the one who spoke based on knowledge will be the better of the two on the Judgment Day. That's because his benefit is for the people while the benefit of the one who kept silent is only for himself." Then, the man said to Umar: "O Amir of the believers, but what about the trials of speaking?" Upon hearing that, Umar wept profusely.

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I have for many days been seeing the Caliph Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz in my dreams. I heard him talk about this question and I think I debated it with him and understood him to be saying: "Speaking that which is good is superior to keeping silent." And, I believe that Sulaiman ibn Abdul-Malik was there and Umar said this to him.

It has been narrated from Sulaiman ibn Abdul-Malik that he said: "Silence is the sleep of the mind and speaking is its waking hours. Neither one can be complete without the other." In other words, both silence and speaking are necessary.

How wonderful are the words spoken by 'Ubaidullah ibn Abi Ja'far – the jurisprudent of Egypt in his time and one of the wise men – who said, "If a man is speaking in a gathering and finds his speaking to his liking, let him become silent. And, if he is silent in a gathering and finds his silence to his liking, let him speak."

This is good because if he does this then both his silence and his speaking are at odds with his desires and pride in himself. And, whoever's state is thus is more likely to be given success from Allah and for both his silence and his speaking to be appropriate – because both of them are for Allah's sake.

[Divider]

Second: The second thing the Prophet ordered us to do in this hadith is "to honor your neighbor:" Allah, Most High, said:

{Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him and be kind to your two parents, to relatives, orphans, the poor, and to your neighbor by family relation, your neighbor by proximity, and your associates, as well as travelers, and what your right hands possess. Surely, Allah does not love one who is prideful and boastful.} An-Nisaa: 36

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It is reported in *Musnad Al-Bazzaar* from the narration of Hudhaifa and attributed to the Prophet: "**Neighbors are three: one who has one right [over you] – and this is the least of them – one who has two rights and on who has three rights. The one with only one right is the pagan who is not related to you. He has the right of the neighbor. The one with two rights is a Muslim neighbor. He has the rights of your fellow Muslim and the rights of the neighbor. As for the one with three rights, that is a Muslim neighbor who is related to you. He has the rights of a fellow Muslim, the rights of a neighbor and the rights of a relative.**"(11)

(11) Al-Bazzaar, #1896, Sh. Al-Albaniy rated it "weak" in "Dhaeef Al-Jaami" (#2674) and the discourse of the current author indicates the same.

This hadith has been narrated from various other routes both attributed to the Prophet and ending at the Companion, but all of them have problems.

It has also been suggested that the terms translated above as your "neighbor by family relation" could in fact mean your next-door neighbor while "your neighbor by proximity" means other neighbors generally, close, but not next-door.

In the collection of Bukhari, from the narration of Aisha who said: "I said: O Messenger of Allah, I have two neighbors, which of them should I give a gift?" The Prophet answered: "**To whoever's door is closer.**"(12)

One group among the first generations said: "The limit for neighbors is forty houses." Other said: "A radius of forty houses in every direction." Among the narrations of Az-Zuhri which were "*mursal*" (sound narrations to Az-Zuhri but not properly attributed to the Prophet): A man came to the Prophet complaining about his neighbor, so the Prophet ordered some of his Companions to announce publicly: "Verily, forty houses are your neighbors." Az-Zuhri commented: "Forty in this direction, that direction, etc., pointing with his hands to the front, the back, the left and the right."

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As for (الصاحب بالجنب) – translated as "associates" – one group interpreted this as spouses. Another group – among them Ibn Abbas – interpreted it as a traveling companion – no to exclude a companion when not traveling but to indicate that being together on a trip was sufficient for this type of companionship. Of course your constant companion while not traveling is even clearer.

In the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Aisha and Ibn Umar, from the Prophet, who said: "**Jibreel kept enjoining on me regarding [the rights of] the neighbor until I thought he would assign him a share in the inheritance.**"(13)

(12) Bukhari, #6020

(13) Bukhari, #6014 and #6015; Muslim, #2624 and #2625

One of the meanings of honoring your neighbors is helping them if they are in need. Al-Hakim reported from the narration of Ibn Abbas, from the Prophet who said: "**He is not a believer who eats to satiety while his neighbor is hungry.**"(14)

In Sahih Muslim: "**O Abu Dharr! When you cook soup, use more water so you can check on your neighbors.**"(15)

[Divider]

Third: The third thing the Prophet ordered us to do in this hadith is: "to honor your guest."

In the two books of sahih, from the narration of Abi Shuraih who said: "My two eyes witnessed Allah's Messenger and my two ears heard him when he said, "**Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honor his guest with his prize.**" They asked: "What is his prize?" He said: "**A day and a night.**" And then he said, "**And a guest is for three days. Whatever continues after that is *sadaqa* (charity).**"(16)

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And Muslim reported, also from the narration of Shuraih from the Prophet who said, "**Hospitality is for three days and its prize is a night and a day. Whatever is spent after that is charity. And, it is not lawful for him to say there until he makes him sin.**" They said: "O Messenger of Allah, how does he make him sin?" The Prophet said: "**He continues to stay but his host has nothing to provide him.**"(17)

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(14) Al-Hakim, 4/167, he rated it sahih as did Sh. Al-Albaaniy in "Sahih Al-Jaami", #5382

(15) Muslim, #2625

(16) Bukhari, #6135, and at the end of it: "**and it is not lawful for him to remain until he makes him uncomfortable;**" and Muslim, #48 on page 1352

(17) Muslim, #48

In these hadith, we see that the prize of the guest is a day and a night and that hospitality is for three days. So, a distinction was made between this "prize" and hospitality, and the "prize" was emphasized. Various hadith have been reported on this.

Abu Daud reported, from the narration of Al-Miqdaam ibn Ma'adeekar-ib, from the Prophet who said, "**A night for a guest is a right upon every Muslim. So, whoever's guest wakes up in his courtyard, it is a debt. If he wishes he can collect his debt and if he wishes he can forgive it.**"[18]

In the two books of sahih, from the narration of Uqbah ibn 'Aamir who said: "We said: O Allah's Messenger, you send us out and we arrive at a place where the people do not welcome us as guests, so what do you think?" The Prophet said to us: "**If you arrive to a people and they arranged for you what is appropriate for guests then accept it from them. But, if they don't do that, then take that which is appropriate for the guest from them.**"[19]

Abdullah ibn 'Amr said: "Whoever does not give his guest hospitality is not from Muhammad, nor is he from Ibrahim! (Abraham)."

These texts show that it is obligatory to give hospitality to your guest and meet his needs for a day and a night. This is the opinion of Al-Laith and Ahmad. Ahmad said, "He has the right to demand it if it is not given because it is a right and an obligation." Does this mean that he takes from his property with his own hands or does it mean that he has a case which can be raised to a judge or ruler? Each of those has been reported as an opinion.

(18) Abu Daud, #3750; Ibn Majah, #3677; and Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated it sahih in "Sahih At-Targheeb wa At-Tarheeb," #2592

(19) Bukhari, #6137; Muslim, #1727

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As for the other two days – the second and the third – this is the completeness of hospitality. What is recorded from Ahmad on this issue is that the obligatory part is the "prize" (first day and night) and he used to distinguish between this and full hospitality. The definite part is the first one.

Humaid ibn Zinjuwaih said: "He should make special effort – on the first day and night – feeding him the best of what he and his family eat. For the rest of the three days, he can just feed him his ordinary food."

This could be debatable! It has been reported from the narration of Salmaan who said: "**Allah's Messenger prohibited us from insisting on serving our guest that which we don't have.**"[20] So, if the host has been prohibited from burdening himself with providing for his guest more than he himself has, this shows that it is not obligatory to be extravagant in providing for a guest, but only to share with him that which you normally partake of.

(20) Ahmad, 5/441, but there is weakness in its chain.

Hadith Number 16

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From Abu Huraira, that a man said to Allah's Messenger: "Advise me." The Prophet said: **"Do not get angry."** The man repeated his request multiple times and each time the Prophet said: **"Do not get angry."** Reported by Al-Bukhari.

This man requested from the Prophet that he give him a *waseeya,* meaning a comprehensive bit of advice what will direct him to all manner of good so that he could memorize it and follow it. Instead of giving him a lengthy advice that the man might not remember, the Prophet answered with a single piece of advice: "**Do not get angry.**" As the man asked for more repeatedly, the Prophet only repeated this single piece of advice. This shows that anger is the source of much evil and avoiding it is the source of much good.

This man who asked the Prophet this question may have been Abu Ad-Dardaa'. At-Tabarani reported, from the narration of Abu Ad-Dardaa' who said: "I said: O Messenger of Allah, point me to a deed which will get me into Paradise." The Prophet answered: "**Do not become angry and Paradise is yours.**"(1)

And Ahmad reported that Jaariya ibn Qudama said: "I asked the Prophet ...." and he mentioned the same story.(2) This narration gives the impression that the questioner is Jaariya ibn Qudama. However, Imam Ahmad

(1) "Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat", #2374

(2) Ahmad, 5/34

mentioned from Yahya Al-Qattan that he said, "This according to Hisham," meaning that Hisham mentioned that Jaariya was the one who asked the Prophet. Yahya said: "But they say that Jaariya never met the Prophet as reported by Al-'Ijli and others: that he was in the "generation that followed" and was not a Companion.

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The Prophet's statement "**Do not get angry**" to the one seeking counsel could mean two things:

First: The intended meaning is to seek all avenues to having good character. When a person acclimates himself to lofty character and it becomes his custom and his habit, that will lead to an ability to resist becoming angry when confronted with its cause.

Second: Or, the intended meaning could be to not allow yourself to act upon anger or rage when it occurs. Rather, you should struggle against your inclination to act upon your anger and resist whatever it is driving you to do. Even if a person becomes angry but does not obey or act upon that anger, he will succeed in deflecting the potential harm of that anger and may even extinguish the anger itself in short order – and so at that point he will be just like one who never got angry to begin with.

The Prophet used to order anyone who became angry to engage in that which might remove it and quiet it down. In the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Sulaiman bin Surd who said: Two men were insulting each other in the presence of the Prophet while we were sitting with him. One of them was insulting the other in anger and his face was red. So, the Prophet said: "**I know a word that, if he were to say it, what he is experiencing would go away. If only he would say 'I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Shaitaan.'**" So they said to the man: 'Do you not hear what the Prophet is saying?' But he answered them, saying: 'I'm not crazy!'"[3]

(3) Reported by Bukhari, #6115 and Muslim, #261

Imam Ahmad reported along with Abu Daud, from the narration of Abu Dharr from the Prophet who said: "**If you become angry and you are standing, sit down until the anger subsides. If that doesn't work, then lie down.**"(4)

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It has been suggested that the meaning here is that one who is standing is in a ready position to act upon his anger physically, while one sitting is less so, and one lying down less still. So, the Prophet's order was to distance oneself from physically acting upon one's anger.

Muwarriq Al-'Ijli made a wonderful statement about this, saying: "I have never been filled with rage nor have I ever spoken in anger anything I regret later when calm."

Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz became angry one day. His son Abdul-Malik said to him: "You? O, leader of the believers, with all that Allah has given you and favored you with, you become angry like this?" Umar said to him: "Don't you get angry, Abdul-Malik?" He said to his father: "And what is the use of this body of mine if I can't contain my anger in it such that it doesn't appear on the outside?"

These are examples of people who maintained their self-control even when angry.

Ibn Hajr said in his commentary on the man's statement, "I'm not crazy:" This man must have been a disbeliever or a hypocrite or he was overcome by his anger such that it removed all reason and balance such that he rebuffed the one giving him sincere advice and pointing to that which could relieve him from the throes of severe anger he was experiencing with this wicked answer. It has also been suggested that he was among the backward Bedouins and may have had the belief that no one needs to seek refuge from the devil except for one afflicted by insanity. (From Fath Al-Baari, 10/482)

(4) Ahmad, 5/152; Abu Daud, #47820, but Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated it "weak" in "Dhaeef At-Targheeb wa At-Tarheeb", #1645

Ahmad and Abu Daud reported, from the narration of 'Urwa ibn Muhammad As-Sa'diy, that a man once spoke to him and made him angry. He got up and made ablution. Then he said: "My father narrated to me from my grandfather 'Atiyya who said: Allah's Messenger said: '**Anger is from Shaitaan. Shaitaan was created from fire and fire is put out with water. So, when you become angry, make ablution.'**"[(5)]

And, in the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Abu Huraira, from the Prophet who said: "**The strong is not the one who can take you down in wrestling. The strong is the one who controls himself when angry.**"[(6)]

Ahmad, Abu Daud, At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah reported, from the narration of Mu'adh ibn Anas Al-Juhaniy from the Prophet, who said: "**Whoever suppresses his anger though he was capable of acting upon it will be called by Allah on the Judgment Day in front of all creation and will be given his choice, which of the wives of Paradise he wants.**"[(7)]

(5) Ahmad, 4/226; Abu Daud, #4784, but Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated it "weak" in "Dheef At-Targheeb wa At-Tarheeb", #1647. Also, see "As-Silsila Adh-Dhaeefa", #582

(6) Bukhari, #6114; Muslim, #2609

The word *sura'a* (الصرعة), translated here as "one who can take you down in wrestling" means a strong man that no man is able to take down. The Prophet re-applied this meaning and defined it as the one who can control himself when enraged, overpowering the feelings of rage such that there is no sign of it externally. This is the truly strong individual. See, "An-Nihaaya fiy Ghareeb Al-Hadith wa Al-Athar," 3/25

(7) Ahmad, 3/400; At-Tirmidhi, #2021; Abu Daud, #4777 and Ibn Majah, #4186, and At-Tirmidhi said "*hassan ghareeb,*" his terminology for, "The hadith is sound, but unique to one of the narrators in the chain," i.e., at one level of the chain there is only a single narrator.

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Ahmad reported, from the narration of Ibn Abbas, from the Prophet, who said: "**There is nothing you can swallow more beloved to Allah than the rage that a slave [of Allah] swallows and keeps inside. No slave [of Allah] contains his anger but that Allah will fill his breast with faith.**"(8)

Anger is the boiling of the heart's blood in pursuit of repelling what has caused the feeling, for fear of it coming to pass, or in pursuit of vengeance (striking back) at the source of irritation after it has occurred.

What is incumbent upon the believer is that his anger be exclusively to repel something harmful in genuine Islamic terms, whether to himself, or to others, and that his vengeance be only for those who have disobeyed Allah and His Messenger.

This was the state of Allah's Messenger. He never sought vengeance for himself personally, but when the prohibitions of Allah were violated, nothing could stand before his anger.

The Prophet never, in his entire life, raised his hand to strike any servant or any woman, unless in military service in Allah's path. Anas was the Prophet's servant for 10 years and reported that the Prophet never once said to him "Uff" (an expression of exasperation), never said about anything he had done, "Why did you do this?" nor to anything he didn't do, "Why didn't you do this?"(9)

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(8) Ahmad, 1/327, and Ibn Katheer mentioned it in his *Tafsir* of verse 134 of Al 'Imran and said, "It's chain is good, none of its narrators have been criticized and its text is consistent."

(I say): This same meaning has been narrated by Ibn Umar and attributed to the Prophet: "**There is nothing swallowed greater in reward before Allah than the swallowing of anger which a slave restrains seeking Allah's pleasure.**" This was narrated by Ibn Majah (#4189) and the author of "Az-Zawaa'id" said, "Its chain is correct (*sahih*). Also, Sh. Al-Albaaniy said in "Sahih At-Targheeb wa At-Tarheeb" (#2752), "It is authenticated by other chains" (which means multiple chains of narration, although each may have minor problems, all add up to "sahih" when taken together).

(9) This hadith from Anas was reported by Bukhari, #6038 and Muslim, #2309.

And, in a version reported by At-Tabarani, Anas said: "I served Allah's Messenger for ten years. I never once knew which things he agreed with and which he disagreed with because of his complete acceptance of whatever Allah brought about."(10)

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Aisha was asked about the Prophet's character and she answered, "His character was the Qur'an."(11) She means that his manners were those of the Qur'an and his character was that of the Qur'an. So, whatever the Qur'an praised was pleasing to him and whatever the Qur'an condemned was disliked by him.

Because of the Prophet's extreme modesty, he would never confront anyone with what he disliked. Rather, that was only known by expressions on his face, as reported in the two books of Sahih. From the narration of Abu Saeed Al-Khudri, who said: "The Prophet was shyer than a virgin in seclusion. If he saw something he disliked, we only knew that from his face."(12)

When Ibn Mas'ood informed the Prophet about the man who had said (after the division of spoils): "This is a division not done for Allah's sake. This was hard on the Prophet. His face changed and he was clearly angry, but the only thing he said was, "**Musa (Moses) was mistreated in bigger ways than this and he was patient.**"(13)

However, when the Prophet saw or heard that which Allah hates, he became angry because of that. He spoke and was not silent. One day, he entered Aisha's house and saw a curtain which had pictures of living things on it. His face changed color and he took the curtain and tore it up. Then, he

(10) At-Tabarani in "Al-Awsat", #9148. Al-Haithamiy said in "Al-Majma'" (9/16), "There are some narrators I don't know.

(11) Muslim, #746

(12) Bukhari, #3369; Muslim, #2320

(13) Bukhari, #5749; Muslim, #1062

said: “**Among the most severely punished on Judgment Day are those who draw these images.**”(14)

Once, complaints came to him about an imam who read long passages in the prayer making it very long to the point where some people stopped coming to pray behind him. The Prophet became very angry upon hearing this. He reprimanded the people and ordered them to be easy (on one another).(15)

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When the Prophet saw dried mucus in the front of the mosque, he became angry and scraped it off, saying: “**When one of you is in prayer, Allah is facing him, so do not blow your nose toward the front in prayer!**”(16)

One of the Prophet’s supplications was: “**I ask you to give me (to speak) words of truth, whether I’m angry or pleased.**”(17) This is something very precious – for a person to never utter anything but the truth regardless of whether he is angry or pleased. Most people when angry lose the boundaries of what they say.

(14) Bukhari, #5758; Muslim, #2107 (similar)

(15) Muslim, #466, from the narration of Abu Mas’ood Al-Ansari as part of a longer story

(16) Bukhari, #720; Muslim, #547, 548 and 551 from the narration of Ibn Umar, Anas, Abu Saeed and Abu Huraira

(17) Ahmad, 4/246; An-Nasaa’i, 354-55. Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated it “sahih” in “Sahih Al-Jaami,” #1301



Hadith Number 17

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From Abu Ya'laa Shidaad ibn Aws, from Allah's Messenger, who said: **"Allah has mandated kindness in all things. So, if you kill, do it in the best way. And, if you slaughter an animal, do it in the best way. You must sharpen your blade and make it easy on the animal."** Muslim

This hadith shows the necessity of *ihsaan* in all actions.(1) However, the precise meaning of *ihsaan* is specific to each application.

With regard to performing all obligatory acts, what is obligatory is performing them with all of their obligatory requirements. On the other hand, *ihsaan* here means performing them with additional recommended features which are not specifically obligatory.

In abstaining from the forbidden, *ihsaan* therein means leaving them wholly, internally as well as externally, all of which is obligatory.

With regard to being patient even when one is able to act (as in the previous discussion about anger), *ihsaan* here means to do so without any anger or frustration.

The meaning of *ihsaan* in terms of our interactions with others means to fulfill all of our obligations toward everyone and their rights over us without exception.

(1) TN: This word, *ihsaan*, the derivation of which means "to make something good or seemly" can translate into various words in English as we'll see from the following commentary.

As for killing that which is lawful whether people or animals, the *ihsaan* commanded means to bring about the departure of the soul in the quickest, easiest and most humane manner possible. This is what the Prophet mentioned in this hadith. Perhaps he mentioned it as an example, or for an immediate need at that time for it to be explained.

Ibn Hazm reported consensus about kindness in sacrificing animals.

It is soundly narrated from the Prophet that he forbid *sabr al-bahaa'im*, a practice wherein a living animal was restrained and used as target practice until it died.

In the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Ibn Umar, that he passed a group of people who had done this to a chicken (thrown things at it until it died). He said, "Who has done this? Verily, the Prophet has cursed those whodothis."(2)

Muslim reported, from the narration of Ibn Abbas, from the Prophet: That he prohibited using any living thing as a target (for practicing with arrows, forexample).(3)

There are many hadith which convey a similar meaning.

We also see many orders to be compassionate when killing an animal for food. Ibn Majah reported, from the narration of Abu Saeed Al-Khudri who said: Allah's Messenger passed by a man who was pulling a sheep by its ears and he said: "**Must you do this? Do you want to kill it twice?**"(4)

(2) Bukhari, #5515; Muslim, #1958

(3) Muslim, #1958

(4) At-Tabarani in "Al-Kabeer", 11/332; Al-Hakim, 4/231, and at the end of it was "…Do you want to kill it twice? You must sharpen your blade before you lay it down." (i.e., for killing). Al-Hakim said about it: This is an authentic (sahih) hadith according to the criteria of Al-Bukhari. Sh. Al-Albaaniy also rated it authentic in "Sahih At-Targheeg wa At-Tarheeb", #2265

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Imam Ahmad said: “The animal should be led to slaughter in a gentle manner and the knife must be hidden from the animal. They should not see it until the moment of slaughter.”

In (his book) Al-Musnad, from the narration of Mu’aawiya ibn Qurra, from his father that a man said: “O Messenger of Allah, I slaughter a sheep but I feel sorry for it. The Prophet said: “**For this mercy you feel for that sheep, may Allah have mercy on you.**”[5]

Mutarrif ibn Abdullah said: “Allah will dispense His mercy because of mercy felt for a sparrow.”

(5) Ahmad, 3/436. Sh. Al-Albaaniy said about it in “As-Silsila As-Sahiha” (#26), its chain is authentic.

And, this is from the comprehensiveness of Islam and the completeness of its ordering of life in that it even extends to having compassion for animals and treating them with kindness.

Hadith Number 18

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From the narration of Abu Dharr and Mu'adh ibn Jabal, that Allah's Messenger said: **"Beware of Allah wherever you are. And follow up any bad deed with a good one that it may erase it. And always be on the best of character in all interactions with others."** Reported by At-Tirmidhi who said "*hadith hassan*" (i.e., a "good" hadith), but in some copies it was "*hassan sahih,*" which means a level between good and authentic beyond any doubt.

The word for "beware of Allah" is from the root *taqwaa*. The original meaning of this word is for someone to put between himself and what he fears or is cautious of a barrier which will shield him and protect him from the object of his fear. So for a slave of Allah to practice this vis-à-vis Allah means to do what he can to shield himself from that which he fears from Allah – which is Allah's displeasure, His anger and His punishment – by having a barrier between himself and that. That is accomplished by fastidiously doing acts of obedience to Allah and staying away from all disobedience.

Al-Hassan said: "The people of *taqwaa* guard themselves from all that they have been prohibited and fulfill all that has been made obligatory upon them."

Talq ibn Hubaib said: "*Taqwaa* means to act in obedience to Allah, upon light (guidance) from Allah, hoping for the reward from Allah and to drop all disobedience to Allah, upon light from Allah and fear of Allah's punishment."

Ibn Mas'ood said, regarding Allah's statement, {Beware of Allah as is befitting of Him…} Aal 'Imraan: 102: That He be obeyed and not disobeyed, remembered and not forgotten, and that He be shown gratitude and never rejected (or shown ingratitude)."

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**Beware of Allah wherever you are**:"

This means whether in private or in public, where people see you and where no one sees you.

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Ash-Shafi'i said: "The most precious things are three: Generosity in spite of need, pious caution even when alone, and a word of truth before one inspiring both hope and fear." (i.e., one who can cause you harm if they don't like what they hear or benefit if they hear from you what they like.)

Abu Sulaiman said: "The biggest loser is one who shows his best works to the people but then faces with the worst of his deeds the One who is closer to him than his jugular vein."

Some people were trying to seduce a Bedouin woman and they said to her: "No one can see us but the stars." She said: "So, where is the one who arranged those stars?"

Muhammad ibn Al-Munkadir saw a man standing with a woman talking to her and said: "Surely, Allah sees you."

Imam Ahmad wrote in verse:

If you go into permanent isolation one day, do not say

I am alone, but rather say, over me is a Watcher.

And don't imagine that Allah is unmindful for any instant,

Or that anything is hidden from Him, which is hidden.

Mu'adh lived in compliance with this advice from the Prophet. Umar had sent him on a mission. When he returned home, he had nothing. His wife was annoyed and scolded him for that. He said: "With me was one who monitored me and kept me from taking anything for myself." He meant his Lord, but his wife thought that Umar had sent someone along with him to monitor him.

Whoever attains this level at all times or most of the time is among the people of *ihsaan* – those who worship Allah as if they see Him in front of them. Among the people of *ihsaan* – those who stay far away from all major sins and transgression except for the unintentional.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words "**And follow up any bad deed with a good one that it may erase it:**"

Every slave of Allah is ordered to have *taqwaa* in private and in public. Even so, there is no avoiding that people will at least occasionally fall short of the requirements of *taqwaa*. So, we have been ordered to do that which may erase any slips (bad deeds) and that means to follow it up with an extra good deed.

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Allah described the people of *taqwaa* in a similar fashion to His counsel to his Prophet in this advice in His statement: {Rush toward forgiveness

from you Lord and a Paradise whose width is like the heavens and the earth, prepared for the vigilant (the people of *taqwaa*) (133) Those who give of their wealth in both ease and hardship, who hold back their rage and are forgiving with people – and Allah loves those who do good (*ihsaan*) (134) And those who, when they have committed an evil or wronged themselves, remember Allah and seek his forgiveness for their sins – and who forgives sins other than Allah? And they did not persist in what they had done knowingly. (135) Their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and a Paradise beneath which rivers flow, therein forever. How wonderful is the reward of those who strive. (136)} Al 'Imraan: 133-136.

So, Allah described the people of *taqwaa* as people who interact with others with kindness and good (*ihsaan*), who give generously, who restrain themselves when angry and are forbearing and forgiving with others. So he combined in this description extending generosity and being patient with abuse. This is the epitome of good character, which the Prophet advised Mu'adh to maintain. Then, Allah described how they: {… when they have committed an evil or wronged themselves, remember Allah and seek his forgiveness for their sins …} – and they did not stubbornly persist in the wrong they had been doing. This shows that even the people of *taqwaa* may sometimes commit major sins (الفواحش) or minor sins (ظلم النفس), but they will not persist in so doing. Rather, they will remember Allah immediately, seek his forgiveness and repent to Allah for what they have done. The meaning of "repentance" (توبة) is in fact this: not persisting (in doing wrong).

The meaning of Allah's statement {…remember Allah…} is that they remembered his greatness, his power and reach, his recompense of deeds and the punishments for disobedience and sin which he warned us about. This necessitates their immediate reversal, seeking forgiveness and change of course. Allah said: {Verily, those of *taqwaa,* when touched by an evil suggestion from the devil, remember and can then see.} Al-A'raaf: 201

In the two books of Sahih, from the Prophet, who said: "**A slave committed a sin and said: O Lord, I have committed a sin so forgive me.**

So, Allah said: My slave knows that he has a Lord who forgives sins or holds accountable for sin. I have forgiven my slave. Then, he commits another sin…" until He (Allah) said after the fourth time: {**So, let him do as he wishes.**}[1] Meaning: as long as this is his state – every time he commits and sin he seeks forgiveness for it.

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And in At-Tirmidhi, from the narration of Abu Bakr As-Siddique, from the Prophet, who said: "**He who seeks forgiveness is not persisting, even if he repeats it 70 times in a day.**"[2]

Ibn Abi Ad-Dunya narrated from Ali, that he said: "The best of you is the one who is tempted much and repents much." They asked: "What if he does it again?" Ali said: "He seeks forgiveness and repents." They said: "What if does it again?" Ali said: "He seeks forgiveness and repents." They said: "What if he does it again?"Ali said: "He seeks forgiveness and repents." They said: "Until when?" Ali said: "Until the devil is the one who gives up!"

And Ibn Majah reported from the narration of Ibn Mas'ood, attributed to the Prophet: "**The one who has repented from a sin is like the one with no sin.**"[3]

It was said to Al-Hassan: "Shouldn't one of us feel ashamed before his Lord if he seeks forgiveness for a wrong, does it again, seeks forgiveness again and then does it again?" Al-Hassan said: "Expel the devil even if he

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(1) Bukhari, #7507; Muslim, #2758, from the narration of Abu Huraira.

(2) Abu Daud, #1514; At-Tirmidhi, #3559, and he said, a hadith unique (this this chain of narration) and its chain is not strong. Sh. Al-Albaaniy reated it weak in "Sahih Al-Jaami," #5004 (I say): Ibn Hajr mentioned it in "Fath Al-Baari" (1/137) and said its chain was "good" (حسن).

(3) Ibn Majah, #4250, but there is a break in the chain between Abi Ubaidah ibn Abdullah ibn Mas'ood and his father – the narrator of the hadith. This makes it a weak hadith. But, it gains strength from multiple other chains of narration, which is why Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated it "good" upon inspection of the totality of paths by which it was narrated. Allah knows best. See: "Adh-Dhaeefa", #615.

gets you with this thought! Never become despondent about seeking forgiveness."

In "Al-Musnad" (of Ahmad), from the narration of Abdullah ibn Umar, from the Prophet, who said: "**Show mercy that you may be shown mercy; forgive that you may be forgiven. Woe to those who are like funnels to good advice (i.e., no matter how much is put in, nothing is retained) and woe to the persistent who continue to do [the wrong] they were doing knowingly.**"(4)

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The interpretation of "funnels to what is said" (or "good advice") is he whose ears are like funnels to whatever wisdom and good reminders he hears. When any of that enters through his ear, it comes right out the other and he gets no benefit from what he heard.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "…**And follow up any bad deed with a good one…**"

The meaning of the "good one" here could be repentance from that bad deed. Or, its meaning could be more general than repentance, as in Allah's statement: {And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and in parts of the night. Good deeds surely remove the bad ones.} Hud: 114(5)

(4) Ahmad, 2/165. Sh. Al-Albaaniy mentioned it in "As-Sahiha" (#482) and said about its chain: "This chain is authentic (sahih) and everyone in it is trustworthy."

(5) Just as a good deed erases a bad deed, so too a bad deed erases a good deed of lesser degree, based on Allah's statement: {…lest your deeds be nullified while you are unaware.} Al-Hujuraat: 2, and {…do not nullify your acts of charity…} Al-Baqarah: 264, and based on the hadith of Aisha when she spoke to Um Zaid ibn Arqam after he had engaged in *Al-'eena* (a forbidden act of legal trickery for engaging in interest with an appearance of legality), saying: "Inform him that he has nullified all of his *jihad* alongside Allah's Messenger unless he repents." And this is something many righteous people of not conscious of, let alone the masses. So, he does a good deed and then engages in the forbidden confident – when Shaitaan

Imam Ahmad reported, along with Abu Daud, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasaa'i and Ibn Majah, from the narration of Abu Bakr from the Prophet, who said: "**Anyone who commits a sin and then stands, purifies himself (ablution), prays and asks Allah's forgiveness will be forgiven by Allah.**" Then, the Prophet recited this verse: { And those who, when they have committed an evil or wronged themselves, remember Allah and seek his forgiveness for their sins – and who forgives sins other than Allah? – and they did not persist in what they had done knowingly.} Al 'Imran: 135.(6)

In Sahih Muslim, from the narration of Uthman, from the Prophet, who said: "**Anyone who makes ablution and makes it very well, will have his sins exit from his body until they come out from under his fingernails.**"(7)

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There are many other hadith on this subject.

Malik ibn Dinar said: "Weeping over one's sins causes them to drop away like a strong wind knocks down leaves which have dried."

[Divider]

People have differed about the following two issues:

First Issue: Can righteous deeds expiate major and minor sins, or can they only expiate the minor ones?

Some of them said: "They can only expiate the minor sins while the major sins require repentance because Allah commanded his slaves to repent

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reminds him every time of the acts of obedience he did – until he becomes so confident that he increases the acts of disobedience wrongly believing that his good deeds are still valid and helping him.

(6) Ahmad, 1/10; Abu Daud, #1521; At-Tirmidhi, #3006; An-Nasaa'i in "Al-Kubraa" 6/315; and Ibn Majah, #1395.

(7) Muslim, #245

and defined the one who doesn't repent as a wrongdoer. Moreover, the nation is in unanimous agreement that repentance is obligatory and that obligations can only be rendered with intention and motivation. So, if major sins could be expiated with ablution, prayer and performing the remaining fundamentals of Islam, there would be no need for repentance. So, this is invalid according to this consensus."

Also, if major sins were expiated simply by doing the obligatory acts, there would be no one left with a sin which can take him to the fire, only by maintaining the obligatory acts. This strongly resembles the deviation of the *Murji'a* and is clear falsehood.

This is what was mentioned by Ibn Abdul-Barr in his book "At-Tamheed" and he claimed consensus of the Muslims on this point and also cited various hadith:

The Prophet said: "**The five daily prayers, one Friday service to the next and one Ramadhan to the next are all expiations to all that is between them – as long as major sins are avoided.**" This is found in both books of Sahih, from the narration of Abu Huraira.[8] This clearly states that major sins are not expiated by these obligatory acts.

Ibn Attiya has narrated in his *tafsir*, two statements about the meaning of this hadith:

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First: He attributed it to the majority of the people of the Sunnah: that avoiding all major sins is a condition for the expiation of minor sins by these obligatory acts. So, if major sins were not avoided, then those obligatory acts do not expiate anything, major or minor.

(8) Actually, this hadith is in Sahih Muslim only, #233

Second: That they expiate the minor sins in any case but cannot expiate the major sins if there. But they only expiate the minor sins when accompanied by repentance and no persistence, i.e., stopping the minor sin one was doing. He selected this opinion and attributed it to the brightest of the scholars.

The meaning of "with the condition of repenting from the minor sins and not persisting in them" is that if one continues doing them, minor sins become major sins and as such cannot be expiated by good deeds alone.

In Sahih Muslim, from the narration of Uthman from the Prophet, who said: "**Whenever the prescribed prayer time comes upon any Muslim and he makes ablution very well, is focused in the prayer and performs it very well, such prayer will be an expiation of all sins that came before it, as long as he committed no major sin. And that is for all time.**"(9)

Another group of scholars from the specialists in hadith and others were of the opinion that these obligatory acts expiate major sins as well as the minor ones. Among them was Ibn Hazm Adh-Dhaahiriy. He is the one intended by Ibn Abdul-Barr in his book "At-Tamheed" when he rebutted this opinion, saying: "I had not wanted to enter into discussion of this issue were it not for the statement of that individual from which I feared that the ignorant may be misled and fall into destructive major sin, relying on them being expiated by their prayers, without any regret, seeking of forgiveness or repentance. We ask Allah protection from falling into error and to grant us success."(10)

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I say:(11) "Similar ideas can be found in the words of some of the scholars of hadith in issues like ablution and the like. And, we see something similar in the words of Ibn Al-Mundhir speaking about night prayer [which falls

(9) Muslim, #228

(10) At-Tamheed, 4/49

(11) This is Ibn Rajab, the original author, speaking

on] the Night of Decree (ليلة القدر)." He said: "It is hoped for one who stood in prayer on that night that all of his sins will be forgiven – both minor and major." If what is intended here is that one who performs all the obligations of Islam while persisting in major sins is forgiven those major sins, then this is falsehood without doubt. It is something which is known by necessity to be false from the most fundamental understanding of the religion. If, on the other hand, the intention is that if one stops persisting in all major sins and maintained all obligatory acts of Islam, but without repentance or regret over what he did – that all his past sins would be thus expiated and forgiven, this is something which can't be ruled out in general."

The correct opinion here is that of the majority of scholars: Major sins are not expiated without repentance, because repentance itself is an obligation upon the slaves of Allah. Allah said: {…and whoever did not repent, these are indeed the evildoers.} Al-Hujuraat: 11

[Divider]

Second Issue: The second issue in which the scholars differed is: Do minor sins require repentance to be forgiven like major sins or not? It seems that they are expiated by avoiding major sin and by Islam (the obligatory acts) as in Allah's statement: {If you avoid everything major of that which you have been prohibited, we will expiate your sins and admit you through a noble entrance.} An-Nisaa: 31

Some believed that repentance is required. This is the opinion of our companions and others among the scholars of jurisprudence, and the philosophers, and others.

Others did not view repentance as necessary from minor sins.

Among later scholars, some said: "What is required is one of the two. Either one makes repentance or does good deeds which can expiate the minor sins."

In fact, Allah ordered us to repent after mentioning both minor and major sins together. He said: {Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and preserve their chastity. This is purer for them. Allah surely knows all that you do. (30) And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and preserve their chastity…} until Allah said at the end of this verse: {…and repent to Allah all of you, O believers, that you may be successful.} An-Nur: 30-31. Allah also ordered us to make repentance after minor sins specifically, saying: {O you who believe, let not one group deride another group – they may in fact be better than they are – nor one group of women [deride] another group of women – they may in fact be better than they are. And do not speak hurtfully to one another nor use offensive nicknames. What a bad attribute is such corrupt behavior after belief. And whoever did not repent, those are the wrongdoers.} Al-Hujuraat: 11

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As for the Prophet's words: "**And always be on the best of character in all interactions with others:**"

This is one of the components of *taqwaa* (piety) without which it is not complete. It has been mentioned separately because of the pressing need for it to be clear. This is because so many people mistakenly believe that *taqwaa* consists solely of fulfilling all obligations to Allah without the rights of Allah's other slaves (your fellow humans). And so, the order to be kind and good with people has been mentioned on its own. Combining fulfilling all of Allah's rights over us, as well as all the rights of other people over us is something very precious. Most cannot master it except the best individuals among the Prophets and their closest followers.

Imam Ahmad reported along with Abu Daud, from the narration of Abu Huraira, from the Prophet, who said: "**The believer who is most complete in faith is the one with the best character.**"(12)

(12) Ahmad, 2/250; At-Tirmidhi, #1162 and he said: a good and authentic hadith. And Sh. Al-Al-

And they both reported, from the narration of Aisha from the Prophet, who said: "**A believer will achieve with good character, levels of the one who fasts and prays at night.**"(13)

They also both reported, from the narration of Abu Dardaa' from the Prophet, who said: "**There is nothing which will be placed on the scales weightier than good character. And the person of good character will reach with it the level of one [practicing extra] fasting and praying.**"(14)

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Ibn Hibban reported, from the narration of Abdullah ibn 'Amr, from the Prophet who said: "**Should I not inform of the most beloved of you to Allah? And, the one sitting closest to me on the day of resurrection?**" They said, "Yes!" The Prophet said: "**Those of you with the best character.**"(15)

Abu Daud reported, from the narration of Abu Umamah, from the Prophet, who said: "**I am in charge of a house in the highest level of Paradise reserved for people of excellent character.**"(16)

Baaniy rated it "sahih" in "Sahih At-Targheeb wa At-Tarheeb", #2660

(13) Ahmad, 6/90; Abu Daud, #4798, but with the words "**the level of the one who fasts and prays at night;"** Al-Hakim, 1/6 – and he deemed it authentic according to the criteria of Muslim and Bukhari. Sh. Al-Albaaniy said: "And Adh-Dhahabi concurred and it is as they two of them said, were it not for the difference of opinion regarding Al-Muttalib hearing it from Aisha." But then he said: "However the hadith is in any case authentic based on all of the above." See: "Al-Silsila As-Sahiha" #794

(14) Ahmad, 6/442; Abu Daud, #4799; At-Tirmidhi, #2002, and he said: a good, authentic hadith. However, I have not seen the second part of the hadith ("And the person of good character…") except in the collection of At-Tirmidhi via Qabeesa ibn Laith from Mutarrif, from 'Ataa' and he (At-Tirmidhi) said about it: unique to this chain alone.

Sh. Al-Albaaniy said in "As-Sahiha" (#876): Its chain is good. He rated the entire hadith "sahih" in "Sahih At-Targheeb" (#2641).

(15) Ibn Hibban, #485, as mentioned by the author. It was also reported by Ahamd in "Al-Musnad", 2/217. Its chain of narration was rated sahih by Imam Ahmad and by Shakir in his analysis of Al-Musnad under number 7035.

(16) Abu Daud, #4800, and Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated it "good" (*hassan*) in "Sahih At-Targheeb wa At-Tarheeb," #648, see his analysis also in "As-Sahiha," #373.

The meaning of “good character” has been narrated from the first generations.

Al-Hassan said: “Good character means graciousness, generosity and tolerance.” Ibn Al-Mubaarak said: “It is an easy (friendly) face, giving generously and not causing harm.”

Imam Ahmad said: “Good character means that you are tolerant and patient of whatever people may do.” Some of the scholars said: “Good character is restraining your anger, showing a pleasant face – except to the innovator or the openly corrupt - overlooking people’s slip-ups except by way of educating them or a prescribed punishment, withholding your harm from every Muslim and protected individual (by treaty, etc.) except to stop wrongdoing and seizing what has been taken unjustly and restoring it to its rightful owner without overstepping.”

Hadith Number 19

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From the narration of Abdullah ibn Abbas, who said: "I was behind the Prophet one day when he said to me: "**Young man! I will teach you some words [of advice]: Guard Allah that he guard you. Guard Allah and you will find him at your side. When you ask, ask Allah and when you seek assistance, seek it from Allah.**

And know that if the entire nation got together to benefit you in some way, they could never cause you any benefit except what Allah had already decreed for you. And, if they all came together to harm you in some way, they could never cause you any harm except for what Allah had already decreed for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried." This was reported by At-Tirmidhi who said it is "good and authentic." And, in another version also reported by At-Tirmidhi:

"**Guard Allah and you will find him in front of you. Know Allah in times of ease and He will know you in times of hardship. Know that whatever does not come to you was never going to come to you and whatever comes to you was never going to miss you. And, know that victory comes from steadfastness (or patience), relief follows disaster and with every hardship comes ease.**"

This hadith contains many great pieces of advice and global principles among the most important issues in Islam. So much so that some of the scholars said: "I pondered this hadith and I was so shocked I nearly passed

out. I am so sorry about the widespread ignorance of this hadith and the scarcity of true understanding of its meanings."

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I said: "I have devoted to its explanation a large volume."[1]

As to the Prophet's words: "**Guard Allah…**"

The meaning is: guard His boundaries, His rights [over you], His orders and His prohibitions. Guarding all that means fulfilling His orders by compliance, His prohibitions by staying away from them. And, as for His boundaries, by not going beyond what He has commanded or allowed into what He has prohibited.

Whoever does all that is among those guarding the boundaries of Allah, the ones who Allah praised in His Book, saying: {This is what you are promised for every repentant guardian. (32) Who fears the Most Merciful, unseen, and brought a repentant heart.} Qaf: 32-33. And "guardian" (he who preserves or guards) has been interpreted here to mean he who guards the orders of Allah and who preserves [memory of] all his sins in order to repent from them.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**that he guard you**:"

It means that whoever guards (preserves, maintains) the boundaries of Allah and is diligent about Allah's rights over him, Allah will guard and preserve him. For the nature of reward is of the same type as the deed, as Allah said: {… fulfill your covenant with me so I fulfill my covenant with you …} Al-Baqarah: 40.

(1) The commentary he is referring to is titled "Nur Al-Iqtibaas fiy Mishkah Wasiyya An-Nabiyy li Ibn Abbas" and it is in print and available.

Allah's guarding/preserving of his slave includes two types:

First: His protection in terms of worldly concerns such as the health of his body, his children and family and his wealth. Allah said: {He has two agents in front of him and behind him guarding him by Allah's order…} Ar-Ra'd: 11. Ibn Abbas said: They are angels, they guard him by Allah's order, but when his destiny arrives, they leave him."

Whoever Allah preserves in his youth and strength, so will He preserve him when he is old and weak and will give him the joy of his hearing, sight, strength and intellect:

Some of the scholars lived past 100 years, still in possession of strength and intellect. One day, one such scholar jumped very high and the people criticized him for that. He said to them, "We preserved these body members from disobedience in youth, so Allah has preserved them for us in old age."(2)

And on the opposite end of this: Some of the first generations saw an old man begging from people. They said: "This one lost Allah in his youth so Allah lost him in his old age."

And, Allah may preserve his slave because of his righteousness after his death among his descendants, as was said about Allah's statement: {…Under it (the wall) there was a treasure and their father had been a righteous man…} Al-Kahf: 82. So, this inheritance was preserved after his death by Allah because of his righteousness. Saeed ibn Al-Musayyib said to his son: "I will increase my prayers for your sake in hope that you will be preserved thereby." And then he recited that verse.

Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz said: "There is no believer who dies but Allah preserves him among his grandchildren and his grandchildren's grandchildren."

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(2) This particular scholar was the Judge Abu At-Tayyib, Tahir ibn Abdullah ibn Tahir At-Tabriy. He continued to enjoy all of his senses and faculties. He acted as a judge, gave *fatwas*, taught and attended processions until he died at the age of 102. This information is mentioned in "Al-Bidaya wa An-Nihaya" under deaths in the year 450 after the Migration (the Islamic calendar).

Ibn Al-Munkadir said: "Allah will surely preserve a righteous man, his children, his children's children and all of the circles he was in. They will continue to be under Allah's protection and shelter."

One amazing example of Allah's preservation of those under his protection: that he makes animals who by nature are harmful and dangerous his protectors from harm. This happened to Safeena – a slave of the Prophet – when his boat broke up.[3] He managed to get to an island and he saw a lion there. The lion walked with him until he showed him the road. Once he got him to the road, he began making sounds as if he was saying farewell, and then he left.[4]

Ibrahim ibn Adham was once seen sleeping in a garden and next to him there was a snake with a flower in its mouth. It kept defending him until he woke up.[5]

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And, the reverse of this: Allah loses one who loses Allah. So, he is lost among Allah's creation until he experiences harm from what should have been sources of benefit like his family and the like, as some of the first generations said: "If I disobey Allah, I recognize the signs in my servant and my riding animal."

Second (the second way in which Allah guards/protects his slaves): This type is the most honorific way in which Allah protects his slaves: when he protects them in their religion and their faith and saves them from deceptive trickery which can lead one astray and from desires toward anything Allah has forbidden. Finally, he protects his religion at the time of his death such that his soul is taken while he is upon *imaan*. Allah guards the believer who guards the

(3) Meaning, while at sea.

(4) Reported by Al-Hakim, 3/606; At-Tabarani, 7/80 and 81.

(5) TN: Meaning that the snake was shooing insects away from Ibrahim as he slept.

boundaries of his religion and intervenes between the individual and anything which would corrupt his religion with various kinds of protection, as Allah said: {…this was in order to ward off from him all sin and lewdness. He is surely among our slaves granted utmost sincerity…} Yusuf: 24.

Al-Hassan said, referring to people of disobedience: "He was unimportant to them so they disobeyed Him. If they were dear to Him, He would have protected them from error."

Ibn Mas'ood said: "A slave will yearn for something in the area of commercial success or political power until Allah facilitates it for him. Then, Allah looks at him and says to the angels: 'Take it away from him, for if I facilitate that for him, I will end up putting him in the fire.' So, Allah takes it away from him. Then, he frets and only says: so-and-so beat me to it or so-and-so took my opportunity, never realizing that [losing it] was Allah's generosity to him."

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**Guard Allah and you will find Him at your side**" or, in the other version, "**in front of you:**"

The meaning is that whoever guards Allah's boundaries and minds His rights over us, finds Allah with him in all situations. Wherever he turns, Allah is there enveloping him, assisting him, protecting him, directing him to success and to [saying and doing] all that is best. Since: {Surely Allah is with those who are vigilant (have *taqwaa*) and who do good (*ihsaan*).} An-Nahl: 128. This specific "with-ness" is the same as what Allah mentioned regarding Musa and Harun: {Do not fear (you two). I am surely with you, I hear and I see.} Taha: 46. This specific type of "with-ness" (Allah being with someone), entails Allah's aid, assistance, protection and support, unlike the type of "with-ness" mentioned in Allah's statement: {…There is no secret conference of three but that He is their fourth, nor of five but that he is their sixth, nor less than nor more than that He is with them wherever they are…}

Al-Mujaadilah: 7. This type of "with-ness" entails His complete knowledge, His seeing all that they do and His monitoring all of their deeds and it is by way of instilling fear of Allah in His slaves.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**Know Allah in times of ease and He will know you in times of hardship:**"

This means that when a slave [of Allah] guards himself with Allah, preserves His boundaries and respects His rights [over him] in times of ease – thereby maintaining his knowledge and awareness of Allah and maintaining his personal relationship with Allah – then Allah will know him in times of difficulty and take care of him in return for his relationship with Allah when there was no hardship. Allah will release him from his hardship because of this personal relationship, a relationship which entails closeness of the slave to Allah, Allah's love for him and Allah's answering of his prayers.

For a slave to know Allah is of two types:

First: General knowledge of Allah. This means acknowledging Allah and believing Him (His message). This is general to all believers.

Second: Specific knowledge of Allah. This entails the leaning of the heart entirely toward Allah, complete devotion to Allah, comfort and familiarity with Allah, peace in remembering Him, modesty before Allah and the utmost awe of Allah.

This specific knowledge of Allah is that pursued by the knowers or the spiritual seekers, as some of them said: "Poor people of the world! They leave it without tasting the best thing in it." It was said: "And what is that?" He said: "Knowing Allah."

And Allah's knowing of his slave is also two types:

First: His general knowledge. This is His knowledge of all of his slaves and his seeing of all that they do openly or seek to conceal.

Second: His special, individual knowledge of some of his slaves. This entails His love for His slave, His closeness to him, His answering his prayers and His rescuing him from every difficulty. This is the one indicated in the Prophet's statement – narrating the words of his Lord: "**…and My slave will continue to seek closeness to me by means of extra good deeds until I love him. Once I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his vision with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his legs with which he walks. If he asks me, I will grant him and if he seeks shelter in me, I will protect him.** "(6)

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So, in general, whoever interacts with Allah with *taqwaa* (vigilance) and obedience in times of ease, Allah will interact with them with gentleness and assistance in times of difficulty.

At-Tirmidhi reported, from the narration of Abu Huraira, from the Prophet, who said: "**Whoever would be happy with Allah answering his prayers when he is in difficulty, let him increase his prayers in times of ease.**"(7)

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**When you ask, ask Allah and when you seek assistance, seek it from Allah**:"

This comes directly from Allah's statement: {It is You we serve and it is You we ask for help.} Al-Fatiha: 5. To ask Allah means: making supplication to Him and placing one's hope in Him. Supplication is worship and in fact is the core of worship, according to the statement of the Prophet.

(6) Reported by Bukhari. It is also the 38th hadith in the current collection "Nawawi's Forty," so its commentary is coming up, if Allah wishes.

(7) At-Tirmidhi, #3382. And Sh. Al-Albaaniy mentioned it in "As-Silsila As-Sahiha," #593.

[Divide]

As for the Prophet's words: "**The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried,**" (And, in another version: "**The pens have dried with what is to be.**"

It is an expression of the fact that all things, events and proportions have already been ordained or "written," and the conclusion of all that was long ago. When a book is finished being written and a lot of time goes by, the pens have been lifted from it; the pens have dried and the ink with which the book was written has long since dried on the pages. This is an excellent and very clear analogy.

Then, the Prophet's statement (just before this): "**And know that if the entire nation got together to benefit you in some way, they could never cause you any benefit except what Allah had already decreed for you. And, if they all came together to harm you in some way, they could never cause you any harm except for what Allah had already decreed for you.**"(8)

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The meaning is that whatever befalls any slave in this life, whether it harms him or benefits him, all of that was predetermined for him: {Say, nothing will befall us except what Allah has written for us…} At-Tauba: 51. And, Allah said: {No calamity can occur in the land or among yourselves without being in a book before we bring it about…} Al-Hadid: 22. And, {… Say: even if you stayed in your homes, those for whom being killed had been written would have come forth to the very spot on which they will lie [dead]…} Al 'Imran: 154.

(8) This wording is as narrated by Ahmad. At-Tirmidhi's narration is the same in meaning.

Also, the Prophet's statement: "**Know that there is much good in being patient with that which you dislike.**" In other words, when any slave [of Allah] is afflicted with something painful, which was pre-ordained to be his lot, and is patient with that, much good will result from that.

When it comes to Allah's predestination and decree of all calamities, believers are on two levels:

First: He accepts it completely. This is a very high level of belief. Allah said: {No calamity can occur except by Allah's permission. And Allah will guide the heart of whoever believes in him. And, Allah knows all.} At-Taghaabun: 11. 'Ulqumah said about this verse: "It is about a calamity which befalls a person who knows that it is from Allah and so he accepts it fully."

Abu Ad-Dardaa' said: "When Allah decrees anything, I would love to be content with it."

Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz said: "I awoke this morning and I have no joy except for the results of Allah's predestination and decree."

Whoever attains this level, his entire life will be nothing but good things and joy. Allah said: {Whoever does good, whether male or female, we will surely grant them a good life…} An-Nahl: 97. Some of the first generations said: "The good life means: acceptance and satisfaction."

And the people of satisfaction (with whatever Allah decrees) sometimes recognize the wisdom of the One testing them, that He chose them for this test and that He is above any reproach in His decisions. Other times, he may recognize the reward of being patient with whatever Allah has decreed and this causes him to forget the pain of what was decreed for him. Still other times, he recognizes the greatness of the One testing him and His majesty and perfection and so he is too engrossed in witnessing all of that, that he doesn't feel the pain of what has befallen him. This is the level of the elite among the people of knowing [Allah] and loving [Allah]. It can even reach the level where he deliciously enjoys the calamity because of his knowledge that its source is his Beloved (Allah).

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The Second Level: To be patient with trials. This is for one who is not capable of full acceptance of Allah's decree. Complete acceptance (being pleased with) Allah's decree is a lofty degree which is encouraged and loved in Islam. Being patient with it is obligatory upon every believer.

Al-Hassan said: "Acceptance is precious, but patience is the basis of the believer."

As for the difference between acceptance and patience:

Patience means: restraining oneself from complaining and bitterness – when some pain is experienced – along with wishing for it to be gone, along with restraining one's behavior from that which results from that dissatisfaction and bitterness.

Acceptance means: the complete welcoming by the heart of whatever has been decreed, without even wishing for it to be gone, in spite of the pain it brings. Nonetheless, this very acceptance lessens that pain because of the heart's experience of certainty and knowledge [of Allah]. And when acceptance is strong, the feeling of pain may be completely removed.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**and with every hardship comes ease:**"

This is directly from Allah's statement: {…Allah will bring about ease after difficulty.} At-Talaaq: 7

And one of the subtleties of the pairing of relief with calamity and ease with difficulty is that when things become extremely difficult, the slave loses all hope of finding relief from any of Allah's creatures (in this world) and so his heart clings solely to Allah (for hope of relief). This is the reality of *tawakkul* (reliance on Allah), which is one of the greatest means of seeking one's needs.

Allah is sufficient for whoever relies completely on Him, as He said: {…and whoever relies fully on Allah, then He suffices him…} At-Talaaq: 3.

Also, sometimes a slave may feel that relief is slow in coming and begins losing hope in it – after a lot of prayer and humble supplication, but without any sign of an answer. At this point, he turns to himself with blame and says to himself: "This is because of you. If there was good in you, my prayers would have been answered." This self-reproach is more beloved to Allah than a lot of good deeds. It brings about true humility of the slave before his lord and his admission to Allah that he deserved what befell him and has not earned the condition of his prayers being answered. At this point the answer to his prayer comes quickly and he is relieved from what befell him. Allah stands by those with abject humility in their hearts when they stand before Him.

Perhaps what you see will not endure, such that you see

Relief from that on which much time has pressed.

Perhaps relief Allah will bring, for

He has, every day, an order in His creation.

When hardship is severe, hope for ease, for verily it is

Allah's decree that hardship is followed by ease.



Hadith Number 20

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From the narration of Abu Mas'ood Al-Badriy who said, Allah's Messenger said: "**Among that which reached the people from the words of the first prophets is: If you have no shame, do whatever you wish.**" Reported by Bukhari.

The Prophet said: "**Among that which reached the people from the words of the first prophets is:**"

He indicates that this is among narrations that have been passed down from the prophets of old which people pass around between them and inherit generation after generation. For the Prophet to cite in this way indicates that earlier prophets[1] indeed brought this teaching and that it became well-

(1) The word used here for the words of earlier prophets (النبـوة) or its derivative (التنبـؤات) is an Islamic term and should not be used to refer to anything but divine communications from Allah. Many people fall into error in this among the common folk and even some of the scholars and use it as a synonym for estimates or expectations as in "He foresaw such-and-such." This is a serious mistake. The proper word in that case would be he "expected" (توقـع) and the like.

TN: Perhaps this comes from exposure to English and western culture where it is common to say things like "He prophesized this event", "self-fulfilling prophecy", etc.

Another important point to make is that much – probably most – of whatever was circulating among the people allegedly from Musa or Ibrahim or others among the earlier prophets and messengers would not have been reliable. Centuries-old hearsay is NEVER admissible or suitable to establish any belief, reality or ruling in religion. That's why we have the extremely meticulous process of validating narrations before accepting them which you can see reflected in many of the footnotes by the author of this abridgement. The fact of the Prophet mentioning this quotation and describing it as "from the words" of the previous prophets is the thing – and the ONLY thing – which allows us to attribute this to a previous prophet. As for what is in circulation among the people such as all kind of books including the New

known among the people all the way until it reached the earliest Muslims.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**If you have no shame, do whatever you wish:**" There are two opinions about its meaning.

First: That (although grammatically it is imperative) it is not actually in the meaning of an order but rather of condemnation and prohibition. Those who view it this way followed two routes:

1. That it is in effect a challenge. So, the meaning is: If you have no shame, just do whatever you wish and Allah will repay you fully for whatever you choose to do. This is like Allah's statement: {…Act as you wish. He surely sees all that you do.} Fusilat: 40. And, {So worship whatever you wish beside Allah…} Az-Zumar: 15. This was the opinion of a group of the scholars, among them Abu Al-Abbas Tha'lab.
2. That it is in fact an order but its meaning is informative. So, the meaning is: Anyone who has no shame will do whatever they wish. So, it is shame which prevents one from doing despicable deeds. Thus, whoever has no shame will delve deep into every sort of lewdness and evil. This opinion was the choice of Abu 'Ubaid Al-Qaasim ibn Salaam, Ibn Qutaiba, Muhammad ibn Nasr Al-Maroozіy and others. Abu Daud also reported from Imam Ahmad something which indicates that this was his opinion, too.

Second: The second interpretation is that it is indeed an order as indicated by the literal meaning. Thus, the meaning is: If the thing you wish to do is something that people are not ashamed to do – either before Allah or before

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and Old Testaments – which have no chains of narration or evidence to support their true connection to their alleged sources, NONE of this meets the standard whereby we can say, "Jesus said…" or "Moses said…". Any of it could be true or could be untrue. Without a sound chain back to its source we simply don't know, unless a specific item is confirmed by the revelation we do have intact, Allah's final message, The Qur'an and the authenticated Sunnah of His final Messenger. That is why the Prophet taught us that we can neither accept nor reject anything in the existing versions claiming to be the previous books – unless said item is confirmed or rejected by the intact divine revelation we still have.

the people – then do it, with that condition, as much as you wish.

The Prophet has indeed informed us that shame (or modesty) is part of faith (*imaan*) as in the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Ibn Umar, that the Prophet: Once passed by a man who was scolding his brother about being shy, saying "You're too shy!" implying that this was something negative and harmful to him. The Prophet said to him: "**Let him be! Shyness is surely part of faith.**"[2]

Also in the two books of Sahih, from the narration of 'Imraan ibn Husain, from the Prophet who said, "**Shyness brings only good.**" And, in the version in Muslim: "**All shyness is good.**"

[Divider]

But, know that "shyness" (الحياء) is of two types:

First: That which is inherent in one's nature and is not acquired. It is one of the sublime character traits that Allah grants to some of His slaves.

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Second: A trait which acquired and fostered by knowing Allah, His greatness, his closeness to His slaves and his complete knowledge of us and everything we do. This is one of the finest attributes of faith. More than that, it is one of the highest levels of *ihsaan* (true Allah-consciousness).

Shame or modesty before Allah may come about from witnessing His many favors or from observing our own shortcomings in appreciating and showing gratitude for those favors. If any slave is denied both the acquired and the inherent shame, there will be nothing left to prevent him from committing despicable deeds since he has become like one who no faith whatsoever. And Allah knows best.

(2) Bukhari, #24; Muslim, #36

Hadith Number 21

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From the narration of Sufyan ibn Abdullah who said, I said: "O Messenger of Allah! Tell me something in Islam about which I will never ask another. The Prophet said: "**Say: I believe in Allah, then be upright.**" Reported by Muslim.

When Sufyan said: "Tell me something in Islam about which I will never ask another," he was requesting of the Prophet to teach him a single comprehensive principle regarding Islam which would be so sufficient that he would have no need to ask others. The Prophet replied: "**Say: I believe in Allah, then be upright.**" This comes from Allah's statement: {Verily those who say: Our Lord is Allah, and then are upright, the angels descend over them [saying]: Do not fear and do not grieve and receive glad tidings of the Garden which you have been promised.} Fusilat: 30. Abu Bakr As-Siddique said by way of interpretation of {and then are upright}, "They did not associate any other with Allah." It is also reported that he said: "They did not divert any of their attention to any other deity." And, "Then they were upright and steadfast upon the basis that Allah is their Lord."(1)

And perhaps those who said that being "upright" means simply remaining upon monotheism actually meant complete monotheism – the one which makes the individual forbidden to the fire of hell. That means the true implementation of the meaning of "There is no deity except Allah."

(1) By being upright, a slave protects himself from unexpected death by being ready for it at all times – for no one knows when the Resurrection day will arrive.

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The meaning of "deity" here is: The One who is obeyed and not disobeyed out of fear, glorification, awe, love, hope, reliance and supplication. All forms of disobedience (sin) detract from monotheism because they are obedience to the calls of one's own desires and inclinations – in other words, Shaitaan. Allah said: {Have you not seen the one who took as his deity his own inclinations?...} Al-Jaathiya: 23. Al-Hassan and others said: "He is the one who whenever he desires or is inclined to something, he does it. This contradicts being upright upon monotheism."(2)

As for the words "**Say: I believe in Allah,**" this is even more clear and inclusive (of the need for good deeds) all by itself. That is because righteous action is part of faith (*imaan*) and inseparable from it according to the correct understanding of the first generations of Muslims and those who followed them among the scholars of the Prophet's Sunnah.

Allah said: {So be upright as you have been ordered, along with those who have repented along with you and do not transgress. He surely sees all

(2) TN: This is a very important and subtle category of *shirk* (worshipping others along with or instead of Allah) where the offending object of worship is one's self! The word which I have translated as "inclinations" (هـوى) is often translated as "desires" but this really detracts from its meaning. Desires frequently lead one to disobey divine law, but this goes far beyond that. If one disobeys the law, driven by desire, but while knowing and accepting the law, this is a sin from which one can repent as covered previously. However, if one seeks to convince himself and/or others that the prohibited is acceptable to do and in effect not prohibited, this is a much bigger problem and strikes at the heart of one's faith. This doesn't usually arise from what we call "desires", but more likely from one's unrealistic view of their own intellect, powers of reason, analysis and the like. Although ultimately this is probably driven by base "desires" in fact, it has been intellectualized and rationalized so as to appear as something more acceptable and sophisticated. Desires are not what is being taken as a deity beside Allah. For example, someone who claims to believe in Allah as the Creator of all things and the One who sent the prophets, the books and the law but who then accepts some things in the law but rejects other, has in fact taken his own mind (understanding, analysis, etc.) as a deity besides Allah. This is the epitome of irrationality! If Allah is the Creator of all things – including YOU and your intellect – how could anything whatsoever in the law that He sent be "overruled" as it were by your mind, something the Lawgiver Himself created?

that you do.} Hud: 112. So, Allah ordered his Prophet to be upright, along with those who repented with him, and not to transgress beyond what has been allowed them (which is the meaning of "transgression") and then reminded them that He is watching over them and sees all that they do.

Al-Qushairiy and others mentioned, narrated from one of them (i.e., the Companions) that he saw the Prophet and said to him: "O Allah's Messenger, Hud (the chapter in Qur'an) and its sisters have turned my hair gray (i.e., with worry)."(3) The Prophet asked: "What about it turned you gray?" He said: "Allah's statement: {Be upright as you have been ordered.}"

Being "upright" means staying on the Straight Path, which is the religion of values without straying from it, right or left.

That includes performing all acts of obedience to Allah – the external and the internal – along with staying away from all of the prohibited. Thus, this counsel of the Prophet includes within it every single part of the religion of Islam.

(3) This hadith with the wording: "Sura Hud, Al-Waaqi'a, Al-Mursalaat, {About what matter do they ask…} (An-Naba') and {When the sun is rolled up…} (At-Takweer) have made me gray…" was reported by At-Tirmidhi, #3297; Al-Hakim, 2/476, who said "Authentic per the requirements of Bukhari". As for the version cited by our author, it was mentioned by As-Suyootiy in "Ad-Durr" in his tafsir of Sura Hud and he attributed it to Al-Baihaqiy in "Shu'ab Al-Imaan". And there is really no benefit in mentioning this hadith since it gives us no knowledge or useful information – and Allah knows best.

Hadith Number 22

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From the narration of Jabir ibn Abdullah who said: “A man asked Allah’s Messenger saying: ‘What do you say if I pray the prescribed prayers, fast Ramadhan, take the lawful as lawful and the prohibited as prohibited but do nothing more than that: Can I enter Paradise?’ The Prophet said: ‘**Yes.**’” Reported by Muslim.

This hadith was reported by Muslim, from the narration of Abu Az-Zubair from Jabir, and he added at the end: “By Allah, I will add nothing to that.”

[Divider]

Some have interpreted “take the lawful as lawful” to mean holding the conviction or belief of its lawfulness and “taking the prohibited as prohibited” to mean belief in its prohibited status as well as keeping away from it.

It is conceivable that “taking the lawful as lawful” could mean actually doing it. In such case, what is meant by the “lawful” is everything which is not prohibited. This would include all of the obligatory acts, the preferred acts and the neutral (lawful) acts. And the meaning would be: that he does what has not been prohibited, without going beyond lawful and neutral acts, completely avoiding the prohibited.

It is often said: “So-and-so doesn’t allow or prohibit” (or: “take as lawful”,etc.) regarding someone who does not abstain from doing the prohibited nor limit himself to what is allowed – even though he believes in the prohib-

ited status of what Allah has prohibited. So, they deem one who commits the prohibited and fails to stay away from it as one who "makes the prohibited lawful," even though he doesn't believe it to be lawful.

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In any case, this hadith shows that whoever fulfills all the obligations and ceases all the prohibited enters Paradise.

Hadith have been reported from the Prophet by large numbers of chains to this effect or very similar meanings. An-Nasaa'i, Ibn Majah and Al-Hakim all reported, from the narration of Abu Huraira and Abu Sa'd, from the Prophet, who said: "**There can be no slave who prays the five prayers, fasts Ramadhan, pays the Zakat and avoids the seven major sins, but that the doors of Paradise will be open for him and he can enter whichever of them he wishes.**" Then, the Prophet recited: {If you avoid the major of what we have prohibited you, we will expiate your bad deeds…} An-Nisaa: 31.[(1)]

In the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Abu Huraira, who said: "A Bedouin came and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, direct me to an act that, if I do it, I will enter Paradise.' The Prophet said: '**Worship Allah and associate none with Him therein, maintain the prescribed prayers, render the obligatory Zakat and fast Ramadhan.**' He said: 'By the one who sent you with the truth, I will do nothing more than that and nothing less.' When he turned to go, the Prophet said: '**Whoever would be happy to look at a man of Paradise, let him look at this one.**'"[(2)]

Also in the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Talha ibn 'Ubaidullah who said: "A Bedouin came to Allah's Messenger with wild hair and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, inform me what prayer Allah has made obliga-

(1) An-Nasaa'i, #2438; Ibn Hibban, #1748; Al-Hakim, 1/200, who rated it authentic, but Sh. Al-Albaaniy deemed it weak in "Dhaeef At-Targheeb wa At-Tarheeb", #452.

(2) Bukhari, #1397; Muslim, #14

tory on me.' The Prophet said: '**The five prayers, unless you voluntarily do more.**' Then he said: 'Inform me what fasting Allah has made obligatory on me.' The Prophet said: '**The month of Ramadhan, unless you voluntarily do more.**' Then he said: 'Inform me what Zakat Allah has made obligatory on me.' So, the Prophet informed him about the rulings of the law regarding that upon which the Bedouin said: 'By the One who honored you with the truth, I will not volunteer anything nor will I omit anything that Allah made obligatory upon me.' The Prophet then said: '**He will succeed if he is truthful**' or, in another version: '**He will enter Paradise if he is truthful.**'"

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The Bedouin meant that he will not do more than the five daily prayers, the obligatory Zakat, the fasting of Ramadhan and pilgrimage to Makka – meaning more voluntary acts from the type of each of these. It does not mean that he will not act upon all of the rulings of Islam and its obligations outside of these.

There was no mention in these hadith about staying away from the prohibited, because the questioner only asked about actions by which their doer enters Paradise.

So these actions are causes which result in admission to Paradise, but engaging in the prohibited could be an impediment to that. Among the proofs of that is what was reported by Ahmad, from the narration of 'Amr ibn Murra Al-Juhaniy who said: "A man came to the Prophet and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I have testified that there is no deity except Allah and that you are Allah's Messenger, I pray the five prayers, I pay the Zakat on my wealth and I fast Ramadhan.' The Prophet said: '**Whoever dies on this way will be with the prophets, the most righteous ones and the martyrs on the Day of Resurrection.**' Then, the Prophet held up two fingers and said: '**As long as he doesn't disrespect his two parents.**'"[3]

(3) I didn't see this in the printed copy of Al-Musnad

Some narrations ascribe entering Paradise to the doing of certain acts such prayer as in the sound hadith: "**Whoever prays the two cold times enters Paradise.**" ("The two cold times" means the dawn and the night prayer.)(4)

So, all that has been mentioned are causes to an effect, an effect which cannot come about except with the fulfillment of all its conditions and the absence of any impediments. This is shown in the following:

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Imam Ahmad reports, from the narration of Basheer ibn Al-Khasaasiya who said: "I came to the Prophet to give my oath of allegiance. He gave me the following conditions: that I testify that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, that I maintain the prayer, pay the Zakat, make the mandatory pilgrimage to Makka, fast Ramadhan and fight *jihad* in Allah's path." I said: "O Messenger of Allah, by Allah I am not able to do two of them: fighting *jihad* and giving charity (Zakat)." The Prophet clenched his hand and shook it saying: "**Without military service and without charity, by what will you enter Paradise, then?**" I said: "O Messenger of Allah, I pledge my allegiance to you. And so, I pledged to him based on all of those conditions."(5)

But this hadith was reported by Ibn Majah, #3438 and mentioned by Al-Haithamiy in "Al-Majma'", 1/46, who said: "It was reported by Al-Bazzaar and its narrators are all narrators of authentic (sahih) hadith except for the two teachers of Al-Bazzaar. I hope that its chain is good (*hassan*) or authentic (*sahih*)."

(4) Bukhari, #547; Muslim, #635.

(5) Ahmad, 5/224, and its narrators are all trustworthy except for Abu Al-Muthannaa Al-'Abdiy. His name is: Mu'thir ibn 'Affaaza Ash-Shaibaani. Al-'Ajliyyu said: "He is trustworthy and one of the companions of Abdullah (he means ibn Mas'ood)." And, Al-Hafidh said in "At-Taqreeb:" "Acceptable."

(I say): So, with all of that, perhaps this hadith has a "good" (جيد) chain of narration – and Allah, Most High knows best.

According to this hadith, all of the conditions mentioned – if Zakat and military service are omitted are not sufficient for admission to Paradise.

It is also clearly established in authentic hadith that committing certain major sins can prevent one's entry into Paradise, such as: "**One who cuts (i.e., ties of family) will not enter Paradise.**"(6) and "**He who has a particle's weight of arrogance in his heart will not enter Paradise.**"(7)

Some among the first generations said: "A man may be blocked from the door of Paradise for 100 years because of a sin he committed in this world."

So, all of these represent possible impediments which can prevent the acts obedience from getting one into Paradise – or at least right away.

This clarifies the meaning of those hadith which ascribe getting into Paradise to monotheism alone. There are very many hadith with this meaning. One group of scholars said: "The word of monotheism is a cause for entry into Paradise and salvation from the fire, but it has conditions. They are: fulfilling all the obligations and avoiding all impediments – meaning avoiding the major sins."

Al-Hassan said: "This is the center-pole (support), but where are the ropes?" He means that monotheism is the center-pole of the tent, but the tent cannot stand without its ropes. The "ropes" are fulfilling all the obligations and avoiding the prohibited.

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It was said to Wahb ibn Muniyya: "Isn't 'there is no deity except Allah' the key to Paradise?" He said, "Absolutely, but every key has to have its teeth. So, if you bring a key with its teeth the door will open but otherwise, not."

(6) Bukhari, #5984; Muslim, #2556

(7) Muslim, #91

On group said: "This was before Allah legislated the obligations and the boundaries (major transgressions with prescribed punishments)." Ath-Thawriy said: "It was abrogated by the [subsequent] legislation of the obligations and the boundaries." (Meaning that monotheism alone being what gets one into Paradise was true in the early stages, but was abrogated as those things were added by Allah to Islam.)

Others said: "These texts referred exclusively to those who said it (the word of monotheism) truthfully and with sincerity. The sincerity rules out the possibility of persistence in disobedience. And among the hadith whose attribution to the Prophet is less than certain (but the rest of the chain is reliable) of Al-Hassan that the Prophet said: "**Whoever said 'There is no deity except Allah' sincerely will enter Paradise.**" It was said: What does saying it sincerely entail? The Prophet said: "**That it holds you back from what Allah has prohibited.**" This has also been narrated with full attribution to the Prophet from several other chains, but they are weak.

So this clarifies the meaning of the Prophet's statement: "**Whoever witnesses that there is no deity except Allah truthfully and from his heart, Allah has made him forbidden to the fire.**"[8] [In other words] whoever enters the fire even after uttering these words is because of his lack of sincerity in saying it. This word – when true – cleanses the heart of everything but Allah. The one who is truthful (sincere) in saying "There is no deity except Allah" does not love other than Allah. He places his hope exclusively in Allah, fears none but Allah, he relies on none but Allah and nothing remains of his own desires and inclinations. When forces other than Allah continue to have force and effect in the human heart even after the word of monotheism, then it is because of a lack of truthfulness and sincerity in speaking those words.

(8) Bukhari, #128; Muslim, #132

This meaning is attested to by the narration of Mu'adh, from the Prophet who said: "**Whoever's last words in this world are 'There is no deity except Allah' will enter Paradise.**"[9] This is because one at the point of death is only able to speak sincerely, repent, regret things that have passed and firmly intend that he should never go back to [any bad] that he has done.

(9) Ahmad, 5/233; Abu Daud, #3116. And, Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated it authentic in "Sahih Al-Jaami", #6479.

Hadith Number 23

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From the narration of Abu Malik Al-Ash'ariy who said, the Prophet said: "**Purification is half of faith. [Saying:] "Praise is Allah's" fills the scale. "Exalted is Allah" and "Praise is Allah's" fill what is between the heavens and the earth. Prayer is light. Charity is a clear proof (lit: a sunbeam). Patience is shining light. The Qur'an is proof – for you or against you. All the people go forth. [But they are then divided into] one who offers his soul and so sets it free or another who destroys it.**" Muslim

As for the Prophet's words: "**Purification is half of faith:**"

Some of them understood "purification" to mean "leaving all sin" as in Allah's statement: {…Allah surely loves those who repent much and he loves those who purify themselves.} Al-Baqarah: 222.

The correct opinion on which the majority agrees is that the meaning of "purification" here is: cleansing oneself of all impurities with water. For this reason, Muslim first reported it in his chapter about ablutions and likewise An-Nasaa'i, Ibn Majah and others.

Nonetheless, the people differed as to whether cleansing with water is half of faith. I say: Everything which is composed of two parts, each of them is "half" (نصف) even if it is not equal in size or number to the rest such that one is greater. This is indicated by the hadith:

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"I have divided the prayer between myself and my slave two halves."[1] The meaning here is what is read in the prayer, so it has been understood to mean Al-Fatiha. (Actually, that is clearly understood from the rest of the hadith.) Meaning: that it (Al-Fatiha) is divided between pure worship of Allah and asking Allah. So, the worship part is the Lord's right over us and our asking Allah is our right. But the intention is not the equal division of the words.

This was mentioned by Al-Khattabi who cited as evidence that the Arabs used to say: "Half the year is travel and half is being in residence," though the two periods are not equal. It only meant that the days of the year are divided between these two, even if the number of days was very different. It was once said to Shuraih: "How have you awoken this morning?" He said: "I have awoken while half of the people are angry at me." He meant that the people were split between those in whose favor he ruled and those he ruled against. The latter is angry with him while the former is pleased. So, they are two different groups.

A poet said:

When I die, the people will be two halves (factions): One who rejoices

at my death and one praising me for what I did.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: [Saying:] "'**Praise is Allah's' fills the scale. 'Exalted is Allah' and 'Praise is Allah's' fill what is between the heavens and the earth.**"

(1) Muslim, #395

An-Nasaa'i and Ibn Majah reported (from the Prophet): "***Tasbeeh* and *takbeer* can fill the heavens and the earth.**" Al-Firyaabiy reports: "**Two words. One of them, when said, will find nothing impeding it from reaching the Throne. The other one fills what is between heaven and earth. They are: 'There is no deity except Allah.' and 'Allah is most great.'**"

These hadith taken together establish the greatness of these four utterances – of all words which can be spoken. They are: Exalted is Allah (سبحان الله), Praise is Allah's (الحمد لله), There is no deity except Allah (لا اله الا الله) and Allah is greatest (الله اكبر).

As for "praise is Allah's," all of the hadith agree that it fills the scale. And for "exalted is Allah," in the narration in Muslim, the verb "to fill" was either in the dual or in the singular – the narrator wasn't sure. The hadith mentioned (exalted is Allah) and then (praise is Allah's) in that order. The result is that the narrator wasn't sure if what "filled from the heavens to the earth" was the two of them together or just one of them.

In any case, saying (exalted is Allah) is not on the same level as saying (praise is Allah's), the latter being superior, as was mentioned explicitly in what was narrated from Ali, Abu Huraira, Abdullah ibn Umar and a man from Bani Sulaim that: "**(Exalted is Allah) is half the scale but (Praise is Allah's) fills it.**"(2)

The reason for that is that when we say (praise is Allah's), this asserts every praiseworthy thing about Allah. So it includes affirming all of Allah's attributes of perfection and majesty. Saying (exalted is Allah), on the other hand is negating the possibility of any flaws, defects or weaknesses from Allah. So, the affirmation of perfection is stronger than the negating of flaws or imperfection. Affirmation generally is stronger than negation. For this reason (exalted is Allah) is not seen alone, but rather paired with something which affirms Allah's attributes of perfection. Sometimes it is paired with

(2) This is why sura Al-Fatiha which begins with (Praise is Allah's, Lord of all beings…) starts every unit (*rakaa*) of the prayer and the prayer is not valid if one didn't read it in each of them.

praise as in: "exalted is Allah and with His praise" (سبحان الله وبحمده) or "exalted is Allah and praise is Allah's" (سبحان الله والحمد لله). Other times, it is paired with one of the names of Allah which indicate His majesty and perfection, for example: "Exalted is Allah, the great" (سبحان الله العظيم).

So, if the hadith of this chapter means that what fills between the heavens and the earth is both of them together, then this is clear. But, if the meaning is that either one of them alone does so, we should note that the scale is bigger than the heavens and the earth, so whatever fills the scales has to be bigger than that which fills what is between the heavens and the earth. This is indicated by a narration which is authentic to Salman (a Companion) who said: "**The scales will be set up on the Day of Resurrection. And, if the heavens and the earth were weighed in them, they could accommodate them.**" Al-Hakim reported it attributed all the way to the Prophet and rated it authentic, but the well-known one is the one that is only authenticated to Salman.(3)

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And they differed as to which utterance is superior: (praise is Allah's) or (there is no deity except Allah). Ibn Abdul-Barr and others mentioned this discussion. An-Nakh'iy said: "They saw that (praise is Allah's) is the most repeated." Ath-Thawriy said: "No utterance is more repeated than (praise is Allah's)."

And this praise (الحمد) includes all types of perfection for Allah. So monotheism is part of it.(4)

(3) Reported by Al-Hakim, 4586 (as connected), but our author disagreed with him as you can see.

(4) TN: Another important distinction between these two statements is that "exalted is Allah" deals only with Allah's perfection and the absence of any flaw or shortcoming, which we assert with this statement, otherwise known as his "lordship" or in Arabic: *ruboobiya*. The other statement, "praise is Allah's" or "all praise belongs to Allah" goes beyond this to include our own relationship to Allah. This indicates Allah's complete right over us as our deity and lawgiver or in Arabic: his *uloohiya*. The word translated "praise" here also includes the

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**Prayer is light. Charity is a clear proof (lit: a sunbeam). Patience is shining light:**"

These three acts are all "light," but some of them are particular forms among the forms of light:

Prayer is pure light. It is light for the believers in their hearts and in their vision. For this reason it was the "peace of their eyes" to the people of *taqwaa*, as the Prophet himself used to say: "**…and my peace of mind has been placed in the prayer,**" reported by Ahmad and An-Nasaa'i.(5) (The Arabic expression translated "peace of mind" literally means "calmness of my eye.") And prayer is also light for the believers in their graves, most especially the night prayer as Abu Ad-Dardaa' said: "Pray two rakaat in the darkness of the night for the darkness of the grave." In the hereafter, prayer is light for the believers against the darkness of resurrection and upon the Bridge. In "Al-Musnad" and "Sahih Ibn Hibbaan," from the narration of Abdullah ibn 'Amr from the Prophet who mentioned prayer and then said: "**Whoever maintained it, it is for them light, a proof and salvation on the Day of Resurrection. But whoever failed to maintain it, it will be neither light, nor salvation or proof.**"(6) (7)

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meaning of gratitude. So, while "exalted is Allah" is limited to extolling Allah's greatness and perfection, the second statement "praise is Allah's" goes beyond that to assert our gratitude to the One and Only Deity.

(5) Ahmad, 3/128. And Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated it authentic in "Sahih Al-Jaami", #3124.

(6) Ahmad, 2/169; Ibn Hibbaan, #1467. Al-Mundhiry mentioned it in "At-Targheeb wa At-Tarheeb and said: "Ahmad reported it with a good chain of narration." And I used to hear the noble Shaikh and scholar of hadith Abdul-Aziz bin Abdullah ibn Baz many times mentioning the soundness of its chain of narration.

(7) The nobility and importance of prayer and the danger of neglecting it has been discussed earlier in this book.

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Charity is a "sunbeam" (برهان). The origin of this word is the rays of light coming directly from the sun. For this reason it took on the meaning of "incontrovertible proof" (which is mostly how the word is used). This of course is based on the clarity with which conclusive proof points to its conclusion – "clear as the sun," so to speak. Similarly, the giving of charity[8] is proof of faith. This is because human souls love wealth by nature and are inclined toward miserliness. So, when they allow the taking of a portion of it (to help others), this points to true faith in Allah, his promises and his threats.

Patience is a "shining light" or "a light that shows the way" (ضياء). This means the kind of light which also results in heat or burning, like the light of the sun but unlike the light of the moon. The latter is just light – it shines without warming or burning. Allah said: {He is the one who made the sun a shining light (ضياء) and the moon light…} Yunus: 5. Similarly, Allah described the law of Musa (Moses) as a shining light: {And we gave Musa and Harun the Criterion, a shining light and a reminder to the people of *taqwaa*.} Al-Anbiyaa': 48. This, after mentioning that in the *Taurah* given to Musa was light: {It is We who sent down the Taurah in which is guidance and light…} Al-Ma'idah: 44. However, what predominates in the *shari'a* of Musa is "shining light" (in the sense of a source of both heat and light), because of the burdens, restrictions and difficult requirements it imposed. Contrarily, Allah described the *shari'a* of Muhammad (the final one for mankind) as being "light" because of its quality of being pure and generous monotheism (الحنفية السمحة): {…Our Messenger has now come to you clarifying for you much of what you used to conceal of the book and he forgives much. Such has come to you pure light from Allah and a clear book.} Al-Ma'idah: 15.

(8) TN: Note that the word "charity" (صدقة) when used in hadith nearly always means Zakat (زكاة) the annual, obligatory turning over of a specified portion of one's wealth which is administrated – collected and distributed - by the ruler, even though in everyday speech we usually distinguish by using Zakat exclusively for the latter and using "charity" (صدقة) to mean voluntary giving above and beyond the obligatory Zakat. This distinction is mostly not found in the words of the Prophet.

Since patience is often difficult for the individual, one needs to combat their own spirit – its desires and inclinations, restrain it and hold it back from some of its desires and so patience is the "shining light" (both light and heat). The original meaning of the word for patience (صبر) in Arabic is "restraint."

Praiseworthy patience is of several types:

1. Patience (i.e., steadfastness) in obedience to Allah,
2. Patience (i.e., in resisting) vis-à-vis disobedience to Allah, and
3. Patience with whatever Allah decrees to be (one's fate).

Patience in matters of obedience and disobedience is superior to patience with Allah's decree. The first generations stated this explicitly. Among them and Saeed ibn Jubair, Maimoon ibn Mahraan.

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As for the Prophet's words: "**The Qur'an is proof – for you or against you:**"

'Amr ibn Shuaib narrated from his father, from his grandfather, from the Prophet, who said: "**The Qur'an will appear in the form of a man on the Day of Resurrection. A man will be brought out who retained the Qur'an but went against its orders. It will manifest before him as an opponent and say: 'O Lord, you caused him to carry me but what an evil vessel he was. He transgressed my boundaries, neglected my obligations, committed my disobedience, and neglected my obedience.' He continued establishing evidences against him until it was said: 'His fate is up to you.' So, he seized him by the hand, not releasing him until he had cast him on his nose in the fire. Then, a righteous man is brought out who retained the Qur'an and memorized it. It again appears before him as his opponent and says: 'O Lord, you caused him to carry me and**

he was the best vessel. He guarded my boundaries, fulfilled my obligations, stayed away from my prohibitions and followed my obedience.' He continued presenting evidence regarding him until it was said: 'His fate is up to you.' So, he took him by the hand and did not release him until he had dressed him in silken garments, placed a royal crown on his head and given him to drink from a goblet of wine."(9)

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's words: "**All the people go forth. [But they are then divided into] one who offers his soul and so sets it free or another who destroys it:**"

This hadith tells us that every human soul is striving, either toward their own destruction or toward their liberation. Whoever strives in obedience to Allah, has sold his soul to Allah and has liberated it from His punishment. But, whoever strives in disobedience to Allah, has sold his soul to lowliness and destroyed it with sins which bring on the anger of Allah and His punishment: {Allah has surely purchased from the believers their lives and their wealth and the exchange is Paradise. They fight in the path of Allah, killing and being killed. [This is] a binding promise upon Him in the Taurah, the Injeel and the Qur'an. And who is better at keeping promises than Allah? So, receive good tidings of your exchange which you have undertaken. That is the greatest success.} At-Tauba: 111.

Some of the first generations made this purchase with their wealth. Some of them donated everything they owned [in Allah's path]. Among them was Habib Abu Muhammad. Others donated their own weight in silver three or four times, such as Khalid At-Tahhaan. Still others exerted their maximum effort in good deeds, saying: I am like a prisoner striving for my liberation." Among those was 'Amr ibn 'Utbah. Some of them would exalt Allah (saying: "*subhaana Allah*") twelve thousand times every day – the amount of his own blood money, as if he had killed himself – so he seeks his liberation with his own *diya* (blood money).

(9) Reported by Ibn Abe Shaiba (10/491), but there is weakness in its chain.

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Al-Hassan said: The believer is a prisoner in this world, striving to save himself and nothing is guaranteed until he meets Allah.”

Hadith Number 24

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From the narration of Abu Dharr who said, from the Prophet, from what he narrated from his Lord, that He said: "**My slaves! I have forbidden myself oppression and injustice and made it prohibited among you, so do not oppress one another. My slaves! All of you are lost except those who I grant guidance, so seek guidance from me that I may guide you. My slaves! All of you are hungry except those who I feed, so seek sustenance from me that I may feed you. My slaves! All of you are naked except the one who I clothe, so seek clothing from me that I may clothe you. My slaves! You err by night and by day, but I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from me that I may forgive you. My slaves! You will never reach [the ability] to harm me such that you cause me any harm, nor will you reach [the ability] to benefit me such that you bring me any benefit.**

My slaves! If all of your hearts, from the first of you to the last of you, your humans and your *Jinn* were all on the level of the most pious one among you, that would not bring about the slightest increase in my dominion. My slaves! If all of your hearts, from the first of you to the last of you, your humans and your *Jinn* were all as evil as the most evil one among you, that would not bring about the slightest decrease in my dominion.

My slaves! If all of you, from the first of you to the last of you, your humans and your *Jinn* were standing in a single plain and [all of] you

asked me [for everything you want] and I gave every single one [all of] his wishes, none of that would diminish what is with me except as a needle dipped in the ocean [then removed] decreases the water in that ocean.

My slaves! They are your actions alone. I tally them for you and then repay them completely. So, whoever finds good, let him praise Allah; and whoever finds other than that, let him blame no one but himself." Reported by Muslim.

Ahmad said about this: "This is the noblest hadith ever narrated by the people of the Levant."

As for the Prophet's words – attributed to his Lord: "**My slaves! I have forbidden myself oppression and injustice:**"

The means that Allah has prevented himself from ever being unjust to his slaves. This indicates that Allah has the ability to treat unjustly, but he will never do it out of His grace and generosity.

[Divider]

His statement: "**and made it prohibited among you, so do not oppress one another:**"

Oppression is of two types:

First: Self-oppression or being unjust to oneself. The worst of this is *shirk* (associating anything or anyone with Allah in His lordship or deityship), followed by sins in their various levels of severity from the major sins to the minor sins.

Second: For one slave of Allah to oppress another. This is what is mentioned in this hadith.

In the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Ibn Umar, from the Prophet, who said: "**Oppression (الظلم) is darkness (ظلمات) on the Day of**

Resurrection."[1] And, in Sahih Al-Bukhari only, from the narration of Abu Huraira, from the Prophet, who said: "**Whoever has any outstanding injustice against his brother, let him resolve it fully to the other's satisfaction, leaving no *dinar* nor *dirham* outstanding. Do this, before his brother takes from his good deeds. If he has no good deeds, he will be given of the bad deeds of his brother until he is thrown in the fire.**"[2]

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As for the statement: "**All of you are lost except those who I grant guidance, so seek guidance from me that I may guide you. My slaves! All of you are hungry except those who I feed, so seek sustenance from me that I may feed you. My slaves! All of you are naked except the one who I clothe, so seek clothing from me that I may clothe you. My slaves! You err by night and by day, but I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from me that I may forgive you:**"

This shows that the entire creation is in absolute need of Allah, Most High, for all forms of acquiring benefit and deflecting harm. This is in all affairs, both worldly and religious. And also, that none of that is within the control or ability of anyone. {...Whoever Allah guides are the guided. And, as for the one He leaves astray, you will never find for him any ally or guide.} Al-Kahf: 17.

This hadith proves that Allah loves for His slaves to ask Him for any and all of their needs and benefits, both worldly and religious, whether food, drink, clothing and the like ,or that they ask Him for guidance to the right path and forgiveness.

In another hadith: "**You should ask Allah for all of your needs, even asking him for a shoelace which has broken.**"[3]

(1) Bukhari, #2447; Muslim, #2579.

(2) Bukhari, #2449.

(3) Reported by At-Tirmidhi – at least according to some of the manuscripts. See "Silsila Al-

Some of the first generations used to ask Allah for all of their wants and needs, even salt for his bread dough or fodder for his sheep. Anything that a slave of Allah needs and asks Allah for it means that he has shown (and acknowledged) his complete need for Allah in all things – and this is something Allah loves.

Some of the first generations felt embarrassed to ask Allah for any of their worldly needs. However, following the Sunnah is better.(4)

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As for the statement "**All of you are lost except those who I grant guidance:**"

Some believed that this hadith is in conflict with the hadith of 'Iyaadh ibn Himar [from the Prophet]: "**Allah says: I created my slaves upon pure monotheism** (and, in one version: "**muslims**"), **but the devils take them astray.**"(5) But, their understanding is not correct. Allah created all children of Adam and implanted in them a nature which inclines toward submission and obedience to Allah (i.e., islam). They are more inclined to Allah than to others and are prepared and strong enough for that. But, there is also a necessity that Islam be learned in practice. Man is, before this knowledge is acquired, profoundly ignorant and knows nothing, as He Himself said: {And it is Allah who brought you forth from your mothers' wombs, knowing nothing…} An–Nahl: 78. And, He said to his Prophet: {And, We found you lost then guided you.} Adh-Dhuhaa: 7. He found you with no knowledge of what He then taught you of the Book and the Wisdom. Also, as Allah said: {And thus we communicated to you an inspiration and a mercy by our order. You

Ahaadeeth Adh-Dhaeefa", #1392. Sh. Al-Albaaniy mentioned that Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar rated it "good" (*hassan*) in "Zawaa'id Al-Bazzaar", page 305.

(4) One of the clearest proofs of that is Allah's praise for those believers who supplicate to him, saying: {Our Lord! Grant us good in this life and good in the hereafter and shield us form the fire.} Al-Baqarah: 201.

(5) Muslim, #2865.

did not know what the book was before that, nor faith.} Ash-Shuraa: 52. So, every human being is born prepared and with an instinct for receiving the truth. So, if Allah guides him, He brings into his life one who teaches him the guidance, so he becomes guided in reality after being one of the guided in Allah's decree. If Allah decides otherwise, He brings to him those who teach him and change his fundamental nature (of belief) as the Prophet said: "**Every newborn is born upon sound instinct. Then, his two parents turn him into a Jew or a Christian or a Magian.**"[6]

As for the believer asking Allah for guidance, guidance is of two types:

First is overall guidance. This means being guided to *Islam* (submission and obedience) and *imaan* (belief). This happens for every believer.

Second is detailed guidance. This means being guided to knowledge of the details in all areas of Islam and being assisted to implement all of that. This is needed by every believer day and night. That's why part of what Allah ordered us to read in every *rakaat* (unit) of every prayer is: {Guide us on the straight path.} Al-Fatiha: 6. And, the Prophet used to say in his supplications in the night: "**Guide me to the truth of that about which there is dispute by Your leave. You surely guide whoever you wish to a path that is straight.**"[7]

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This is why when someone sneezes, we say to them: "May Allah have mercy on you." And, he is to answer: "May Allah guide you…" - as we have been instructed in the Sunnah (by the Prophet).[8] This, in spite of the fact that some scholars from Iraq rejected this – based on their supposition that a Muslim is not in need of someone to pray for him/her to be guided! The

(6) Bukhari, 3/219, Muslim, #2658.

(7) Muslim, #770.

(8) Bukhari, #5870

masses of the scholars disagreed with them on this by following the Sunnah in this matter.

And, the Prophet ordered Ali to supplicate Allah to grant him correctness and guidance.(9)

As for seeking forgiveness – asking Allah for His forgiveness – the slave [of Allah] needs this above all else, because he commits errors by night and by day. Repentance and seeking of forgiveness have been mentioned repeatedly in the Qur'an along with encouragement and orders to do them.

Bukhari reports, from the narration of Abu Huraira, from the Prophet, who said: "**By Allah, I seek Allah's forgiveness and repent to Him more than seventy times each day.**"(10) An-Nasaa'i and Ibn Majah reported it with the wording: "**I seek Allah's forgiveness and repent to Him one hundred times in every day.**"(11)

Muslim reported, from the narration of Al-A'azz Al-Muzaniy that he heard the Prophet say: "**O people, repent to your Lord for I surely repent to him one hundred times in a day.**"(12) And in the version reported by An-Nasaa'i: "**O people, repent to your Lord and seek His forgiveness, for I surely repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness one hundred times every day.**"(13)

As for the words: "**You will never reach [the ability] to harm me such that you cause me any harm, nor will you reach [the ability] to benefit me such that you bring me any benefit:**"

This means that the slaves are not capable of causing any kind of benefit or any kind of harm to Allah. This is because Allah Himself is free of any need (غني) worthy of all praise and gratitude (حميد). He has no need for the

(9) Muslim, #2725, as previously mentioned.

(10) Bukhari, #5948

(11) An-Nasaa'i in "Al-Kubraa", 6/114; Ibn Majah, #3815

(12) Muslim, #2702

(13) An-Nasaa'i in "Al-Kubraa", 6/116

obedience of His slaves, nor does any benefit accrue to Him from them. Rather, it is they who benefit from it (i.e., obedience). Similarly, Allah is in no way harmed by their disobedience and sin. Rather, it is they who are harmed by it.

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Allah Most High said: {Do not let those who rush to rejection cause you grief. They will never harm Allah in the least...} Al 'Imran: 176. And, He said: {…and whoever turns back on their heels, will never harm Allah in the least...} Al 'Imran: 144. And, the Prophet used to say in his sermons: "**Whoever disobeys Allah and His Prophet has gone astray. And, he harms no one but himself. He does not harm Allah in any way.**"(14) Allah said: {…and if you reject, know that to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth and Allah is free of all need, worthy of all praise.} An-Nisaa: 131. And, Allah said, reporting the words of Musa: {And Musa said: If you reject, you and everyone on earth, surely Allah is free of all need, worthy of all praise.} Ibrahim: 8. And, He said: {As for whoever rejects, surely Allah is free of all need, worthy of all praise.} Luqman: 12. And (regarding sacrifices), {Its meat will not reach Allah nor its blood. But your piety reaches Him.} Al-Hajj: 37

The meaning: That Allah loves from His slaves that they are conscious of Him and obey Him just as He dislikes from them that they disobey Him. This is why Allah is joyful when someone turns back in repentance to Him – a joy greater than the one described in the hadith as follows: His riding animal wandered off in the desert carrying his food and drink, he searched and searched until he finally gave up on hope for living and surrendered to his death. Then, he was overcome with sleep and slept. When he awoke, he saw his animal with all his supplies standing before him. What greater joy can we imagine in this worldly life? And yet, Allah's joy with the repentance of one

(14) Abu Daud, #1097 and #2119, but its chain is weak.

of His slaves is greater. And this in spite of the fact that Allah has absolutely no need for the obedience and repentance of His slave and it will not benefit Allah in any way. All of its benefit accrues to the slave of Allah himself. This is reflective of Allah's complete and perfect generosity and kindness toward His creation, his love for what benefits them and desire to keep harm away from them. He loves for His slaves to know Him, love Him, fear Him, beware of Him, and obey Him and to come closer to Him. He loves for them to know that no one can forgive sins except Allah and that He is fully capable of forgiving their sins, as found in the narration of Abdur-Rahman ibn Ghanam, from Abu Dharr of the same hadith: "**Whosoever among you knows that I have the power to forgive, then asks my forgiveness, I forgive him without the least trouble.**"

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Think about Allah's statement: {Those who, when they have committed some sin or wronged themselves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins. And who can forgive sins besides Allah?...} Al 'Imran: 135. This shows that those who sin have no one to turn to or count on for forgiveness other than Allah. Likewise, His statement regarding the three who deserted from battle: {…until, when the earth closed in on them because of what they had done and their selves closed in on them until they realized that they have no refuge from Allah except unto Him. Then, He accepted them that they may repent. Allah surely is ever-accepting of repentance, very merciful.} At-Tauba: 118. So, he made their repentance dependent on their realization that they had nowhere to turn (no refuge) from Allah except by rushing toward Him. When anyone fears from any created thing, he rushes away from it, running to others. But, when he fears Allah, there no shelter or place of refuge but with Allah. So, he must flee "from Him" by fleeing "to Him," as the Prophet used to say in his supplication: "**There is no shelter nor any safety from You except unto You.**"[15] And, he used to say: "**I seek refuge in your**

(15) Bukhari, #7050; Muslim, #2710

acceptance from your anger, in your forgiveness from your punishment and in You from You."(16)

[Divider]

As for the words: "**My slaves! If all of your hearts, from the first of you to the last of you, your humans and your *Jinn,* were all on the level of the most pious one among you, that would not bring about the slightest increase in my dominion. My slaves! If all of your hearts, from the first of you to the last of you, your humans and your *Jinn* were all as evil as the most evil one among you, that would not bring about the slightest decrease in my dominion:**"

Allah tells us that no amount of obedience from us will increase His dominion in the least, even if the entire creation was as pious and their hearts as pure as the single best who ever lived. Nor can any amount of disobedience and sin from us ever diminish Allah's dominion in the least even if all humans and *jinns* were as corrupt and sinful and their hearts as dark as the single worst one who ever lived among them. Allah, exalted is He, is free of any need for anything beyond Himself. He is absolute perfection in His essence, His attributes and His actions. His dominion is complete and nothing whatsoever can detract from it in any way.

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As for the statement: "**My slaves! If all of you, from the first of you to the last of you, your humans and your *Jinn* were standing in a single plain and [all of] you asked me [for everything they wanted] and I gave every single one [all of] his wishes, none of that would diminish what is with me except as a needle dipped in the ocean [then removed] decreases the water in that ocean:**"

(16) Muslim, #486

Here Allah tells us about the complete perfection of his power, his sovereignty, and that neither his dominion nor his wealth can be diminished in the least by giving to His creation – even if He were to give every individual from the first to the last, both human and *jinn* – everything they could ask for at one time. In this there is an encouragement to the creation to ask for their needs and that their needs can be given to them because of that.

In the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Abu Huraira, from the Prophet, who said: "**Allah's hand (i.e., reserves) is full. Spending continuously night and day does not diminish it. Imagine how much He has given since creating the heavens and the earth? That has not diminished at all what is in His right hand.**"(17)

His statement, "**none of that would diminish what is with me except as a needle dipped in the ocean [then removed] decreases the water in that ocean**" makes clear that what is with Allah does not diminish under any circumstances whatsoever. This is, as Allah said: {That which you have gets depleted, but that which Allah has remains…} An-Nahl: 96. So, how much water do you think the ocean loses when a needle is dipped in it and then removed? Just about nothing. Especially since the ocean continues to be fed and replenished by the earth's water cycle and rivers that flow into it. So, even if greater amounts are taken from it, it does not diminish because it is being supplied by that which is greater than what was taken from it. This like the food and everything else in Paradise. It never diminishes, as Allah said: {And abundant fruit. Never cut off, never denied.} Al-Waaqi'a: 32-33

And, in the hadith, as reported by At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, the reason why what Allah has is never diminished by giving is explained in the Prophet's statement, "**[Allah said]…That is because I am generous, I have plenty and I am sovereign. I do whatever I wish. My giving is just a word and my punishment is just a word. All I need do, for anything I wish to be, is to say to it, "Be" and it is!**"(18)

(17) Bukhari, #7411; Muslim, #993

(18) At-Tirmidhi, #2495; Ibn Majah, #3257. At-Tirmidhi said about it: This is a sound (*hassan*)

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Do not humble yourself to a created being for desire.

That is harmful to your religion.

And seek sustenance from Allah from His stores.

For that is just between the letter *kaaf* and the letter *nun*.[19]

[Divider]

As for the statement: “**My slaves! They are your actions alone. I tally them for you and then repay them completely:**”

This means that Allah – exalted is He – tallies all of the deeds of his slaves and then he delivers their results (good or bad) fully to them, as Allah said: {O you who reject, make no excuses today. You are only being repaid for that which you used to do. O you who believe, repent to Allah a sincere repentance, that Allah may expiate your misdeeds and put you into gardens beneath which rivers flow on that day on which Allah will not shame the Prophet nor those who believed along with him. Their light strives in front of them and on their right. They say: Our Lord! Complete our light for us and forgive us. You are surely capable of all things.} At-Tahreem: 7-8. And, {… And they found what they had done present before them and Allah does no injustice to anyone.} Al-Kahf: 49

[Divider]

As for the statement: “**So, whoever finds good, let him praise Allah; and whoever finds other than that, let him blame no one but himself:**”

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hadith.

(19) TN: These two Arabic letters spell *kun* or “Be!” a in the previous hadith.

This points out that all good is from Allah as His generosity upon His slaves, not because of any merit on their part to deserve it. And, all bad is from the sons of Adam themselves, from following their own desires and inclinations, as Allah said: {Whatever good befalls you, it is from Allah, but whatever bad befalls you, it is from yourself...} An-Nisaa: 79. So whenever Allah – exalted is He – decides on success and guidance for one of His slaves, He aids him to the success of obedience, and that is a great generosity from him. But, when He decides that another will fail, He leaves him to his own devices and doesn't interfere between him and his desires and inclinations upon which Shaitaan leads him astray exploiting his lack of consciousness and remembrance of Allah: {…and who follows his own inclinations and goes beyond all bounds.} Al-Kahf: 28. This is perfect justice on Allah's part. The proof has been established with the communication of Allah's books and the sending of the messengers. So, no human will have any argument before Allah after the sending of the messengers.

Allah tells about the people of Paradise: that they will thank Allah for all that He provided generously to them: {And we remove all animosity from their hearts as the rivers flow beneath them and they say: Praise and thanks be to Allah who guided us to this and we would never have been guided had not Allah guided us…} Al-A'raaf: 43. And, He said: {They said: Praise and thanks to Allah who kept His promise to us and bequeathed us the land so we roam in the Garden wherever we wish…} Az-Zumar: 74

Allah said: {Praise and thanks to Allah who removed our sadness. Allah is surely forgiving, grateful. He who delivered us to the permanent abode from His generosity. No toil nor weariness is ever our lot therein.} Fatir: 34-35

And, Allah mentions the people of the Fire blaming themselves when they realize all of this: {Shaitaan said, when all had been decided, Allah surely made you a true promise and I promised you but I broke my promise to you. And I had no power over you except to call you and you responded to me. So, do not blame me but rather blame yourself.} Ibrahim: 22



Hadith Number 25

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From the narration of Abu Dharr who said: "Some people from the Companions of the Prophet said to the Prophet: 'O Allah's Messenger, the people of wealth have taken all the rewards. They pray as we pray, fast as we fast, but then they give charity from their wealth.'"

The Prophet said: "**Hasn't Allah made for you that from which you can give charity? Every time you say (Exalted is Allah) it's a charity, saying (Allah is greatest) is a charity, saying (praise is Allah's) is a charity, saying (there is no deity except Allah) is a charity. Enjoining others to do right is a charity, prohibiting them from doing wrong is a charity and [even] your marital relations are a charity.**"

They said: "O Messenger of Allah, does one of us respond to his desires and get a reward for that?"

The Prophet said: "How about if he put that in the forbidden? Would he not get a sin? Likewise, when he puts in the lawful, there is a reward." Muslim

In this hadith we see that it weighed heavily on the Companions if there were acts of good which they wished to do but were unable to do.[1]

(1) The successful one is the one who focuses on those above him in matters of religion in order to aspire to their level but focuses on those beneath him in worldly affairs in order to be satisfied with his lot.

In this hadith: the poor were jealous of the wealthy because of the extra reward they can earn by giving charity, so the Prophet directed them to other types of "charity" of which they are capable.

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In the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Abu Salih, from Abu Huraira that some poor people from among the Migrants (those who migrated from Makka to Madinah) came to the Prophet and said: The people of wealth have taken the upper levels and eternal bounties. The Prophet said: "**How is that?**" They said: They pray as we pray, fast as we fast but they give charity where we don't and they liberate slaves when we can't. The Prophet said: "**Should I not teach you something with which you will match those who came before you, exceed those to follow you and there will be no one better than you, except one who does as you do?**" They said: Of course yes, O Messenger of Allah! The Prophet said: "**Say (exalted is Allah), (Allah is greatest) and (praise is Allah's) after every prayer thirty-three times.**" Abu Salih said: But the wealthy heard what we were doing and they began doing it, too. Then, the Prophet said: "**That is Allah's bounty, He gives it to whomever He wishes.**"(2)

The meaning here is that the poor Muslims thought that charity can only be given from wealth and they were unable to do that. So, the Prophet informed them that all acts of good interaction and kindness are charity.

Charity which does not involve wealth is of two types:

First: That whose benefit extends to others and so it is a charity to them, and it may in fact be superior to a charity of material wealth. For example, enjoining right and prohibiting wrong. It is an invitation to obedience of Allah and abstaining from sin. That is arguably much better than the benefit of some wealth given in charity. Similarly, teaching another some beneficial

(2) Bukhari, #842; Muslim, #95.

knowledge, teaching others the Qur'an, removing something harmful from the road, seeking all that which benefits people and to repel anything which harms them. Also, praying for the Muslims and asking Allah to forgive them.

Also, among the types of charity, withholding your harm from others. In the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Abu Dharr, who said: I said: O Messenger of Allah, which deed is best? The Prophet said: "**Belief in Allah and fighting in His path.**" I said: And which slave is the best to free? The Prophet said: "**The most precious one to his owners and the one with the greatest value.**" What if I don't do that? The Prophet said: "**Assist one to do it or do it on behalf of one who is incompetent.**" I said: O Messenger of Allah, what if I am not strong enough for some good deeds? The Prophet said: "**Withhold your harm from people. That is an act of charity.**"(3)

It is authentically reported from the Prophet that whatever a man spends on his family is also a charity. In Sahih Muslim, from the narration of Abu Huraira, from the Prophet, who said: "**A single Dinar is spent in Allah's path. Another is spent toward the freeing of a slave. Another is given in charity to a needy person. And yet another is spent on one's own family. The best of them? The one spent on one's own family.**"(4)

There are too many hadith with this meaning to mention them all.

In the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Anas, from the Prophet, who said: "**There is no Muslim who plants a tree or farms some crops from which humans, birds and other creatures eat, but that this counts for him as charity.**"(5)

Second: The second type of charity which doesn't involve wealth is one whose benefit is limited to its doer, such as remembrance of Allah. Likewise, walking to the prayer is a charity.

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(3) Bukhari, #2518; Muslim, #84

(4) Muslim, #995

(5) Bukhari, #2320; Muslim, #1553

Things like prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and military service were not mentioned as being charity because the non-wealth types of charity were mentioned in response to the question raised by the poor in Madinah who asked about what they could do to compete with the wealthy who give of their wealth. As for the aforementioned obligations, all of them were doing all of that.

[Divider]

There are many texts stating the superiority of remembrance of Allah over [material] charity and other deeds, as in the narration of Abu Ad-Dardaa, from the Prophet, who said: "**Should I not direct you to the best deed you can do, the purest before your Lord, the one which will lift you the most levels, something better for you than spending gold and silver, facing your enemy and striking their necks or having your necks struck by them?**" They said: Of course yes, O Messenger of Allah. The Prophet said: "**Remembrance of Allah.**" Reported by Imam Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi.(6)

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There are many other hadith of similar meaning.

(6) Ahmad, 5/195; At-Tirmidhi, #3377. And, he added: Then Muadh ibn Jabal said: There is nothing more able to save you from Allah's punishment than remembrance of Allah." Al-Hakim said about this hadith: its chain is authentic. Al-Mundhiriy rated it good (*hassan*). Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated it authentic (*sahih*) in "Sahih At-Targheeb", #1493.

Hadith Number 26

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From the narration of Abu Huraira who said, the Prophet said: “**There is a charity due on each and every joint and body part of every person each day the sun rises: to rule justly between two, help a man onto his mount or lift his supplies onto it. Any of these are charity. A kind word is charity. For every step as you walk to prayer there is a charity. And, removing something harmful from the road is a charity.”** Bukhari and Muslim

The Prophet’s words: “**There is a charity due on each and every joint and body part of every person:**”

Abu ‘Ubaid said (about the word *sulaamaa*, translated here as “joint and body part”): “Its original meaning is a bone in a camel without much meat.” He said: “So, it’s as if the meaning of the hadith is: A charity is due for each bone in the body.”

Muslim reported, from the narration of Aisha from the Prophet who said: “**The son of Adam was created with three hundred and sixty joints. So, whoever mentions Allah, praises Him, testifies to His Oneness, exalts Him, removes a stone from the Mulims’ road, or something sharp or a bone, enjoins a good deed or prohibits a bad deed – to the number of those three hundred and sixty joints – will end his day having protected himself far from the Fire.**”[1]

(1) Muslim, #1007

Imam Ahmad and Abu Daud reported, from the narration of Buraidah from the Prophet, who said: "**In each person there are three hundred and sixty joints. So, he must give a charity for every one of his joints.**" They said: And who is capable of that, O Prophet of Allah? The Prophet said: "**Finding some mucous in the mosque and burying it, moving something harmful off the road and, if you find none of that, the two *rakaat* of the *dhuhaa* (extra mid-morning) prayer will suffice you.**"(2)

In the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Abu Musa, from the Prophet, who said: "**Every Muslim must give charity.**" They said: What if we have no means? The Prophet said: "**He can work with his hands, earn for himself and give charity.**" They said: What if he is unable or he didn't do that? The Prophet said: "**Help one who is needy and despondent.**" They said: And if he doesn't do that? The Prophet said: "**Let him enjoin good.**" They said: And if he doesn't do that? The Prophet said: "**Let him keep his harm away from people and that will be for him a charity.**"(3)

[Divider]

So, the meaning of the hadith is that the arrangement of all these bones and joints is one of the biggest favors of Allah upon his slave. So, each and every one of those bones require an act of charity from the son of Adam in order for that to be an appropriate show of gratitude for this great favor.

Allah said: {O you man! What has misled you away from your gracious Lord? The One who created you, shaped and proportioned you? In whatever form He chose, He put you together.} Al-Infitaar: 6-8. And, Allah said: {Say, He is the One who brought you into being and made for you hearing, sight and feelings. How little you give thanks.} Al-Mulk: 23. And: {And it is Allah who brought you forth from your mothers' wombs, knowing nothing and made for you hearing, sight and feelings so that you may give thanks.} An–Nahl: 78. And: {Did we not make for him two eyes? And a tongue and two lips?} Al-Balad: 8-9

(2) Ahmad, 5/354. Sh. Al-Albaaniy rated it authentic in "Sahih At-Targheeb", #666.

(3) Bukhari, #5676; Muslim, #1008

Giving thanks or gratitude is on two levels:

First is the obligatory. This means that you fulfill all obligations and avoid all of the prohibited. This is necessary in all cases and is sufficient gratitude for Allah's favors.

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Second is the preferred gratitude. This means for the slave to work at and perform – after fulfilling all the obligatory and avoiding the prohibited – extra acts of obedience and good. This is the level of the forerunners, those brought near. As the Prophet used to exert himself in extra prayers, standing until his feet were swollen. When it was said to him: Do you do this, even though Allah has forgiven you whatever sin may have come before and whatever may come after? The Prophet answered: "**Do I not want to be a most grateful slave?**"(4)

These types of charity which the Prophet mentioned include some whose benefit extends to others like peacemaking, a kind word, removing something harmful from the road, enjoining good and prohibiting wrong. Others only have benefit for the doer like saying (exalted is Allah), (Allah is greatest), (praise is Allah's) or (there is no deity except Allah), walking to the prayer or praying two *rakaat* mid-morning. These two *rakaat* suffice for all of the 360 body parts because the prayer uses every part of the body in obedience and worship. Therefore, it alone suffices as a charity for every one of those body parts. As for all the other good deeds mentioned, most of them only use some of the body parts, so they do not complete the required charity on behalf of all of them, unless they are performed as many times as there are body parts, which is three hundred and sixty times, as mentioned in Aisha's hadith, may Allah be pleased with her and with her father.

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(4) Bukhari, #1130; Muslim, #2819

[Divider]

Another type of charity whose benefit is limited to its doer is all types of remembrance of Allah, supplications for the Prophet and recitation of the Qur’an.

Also among them is: holding oneself to account for any past misdeeds, regret, repentance from past sins, sadness for having committed them and scolding oneself and holding oneself responsible for them.

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Others include weeping for fear of Allah, pondering His dominion in the heavens and the earth and in other things – and other such things which increase faith in the heart. This gives rise to many of the pious “actions of the heart” such as fear, love, hope, reliance, etc. It has been said that this pondering is better than extra physical acts of obedience. That was reported from more than one of the second generation. Among them: Saeed ibn Al-Musayyib, Al-Hassan and Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz. Also, Imam Ahmad said some things indicative of the same meaning. Ka’b said: “For me to weep out of fear of Allah is more loved by me than to give charity equal to my own weight in gold.”

Hadith Number 27

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From the narration of Nuwwaas ibn Sam’aan, from the Prophet, who said, “**Righteousness is good character. Sin is that which bothers you and which you wouldn’t like others to see.”** Muslim.

And, from the narration of Waabisa ibn Ma’bad, who said: “I came to Allah’s Messenger who said to me: ‘**Have you come to ask about righteousness and sin?**’ I said: ‘Yes.’ The Prophet said: ”**Take the verdict from your heart. Righteousness is that with which you and your heart are at peace. Sin is that which bothers you, causes doubt in your heart – even though people may give you ruling after ruling.**”

The Shaikh (Ahmad) said: “A sound hadith. I reported it in Al-Musnad with a good chain.”[1]

The Prophet defined *Al-Birr* (translated as “righteousness”) in the hadith of An-Nuwwaas as “good character,” but in the hadith of Waabisa as “that with which you and your heart are at peace.” The explanation of *al-birr* was different because this term is used in two ways:

(1) There is a flaw in its chain.

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One of them is as pertains to interaction with others and being kind to them. Ibn Al-Mubaarak wrote a book entitled *Kitaab al-Birr wa As-Sila* (A book about righteousness and family ties). Likewise, there are sections by this name in Sahih Al-Bukhari, At-Tirmidhi. The subject matter is kindness and good relations with others generally. Ibn Umar used to say: "*Al-Birr* is something easy – a friendly face and soft words."

The second use of the word is to mean: doing all forms of obedience both internal and external, as in Allah's statement: {… Rather, righteousness is one who believes in Allah, the last day, the angels, the Book and the prophets and [who] gives the wealth he loves to a relative, to an orphan, to the poor, to a traveler, to those who ask and for freeing of slaves and [who] maintains the prayer and gives the *Zakâh* and keeps their promise when they make one and [who] is steadfast through poverty, hardship and in battle – these are the ones who were truthful and these are the vigilant.} Al-Baqarah: 177. So "righteousness" (*al-birr*) by this definition includes all internal acts of obedience like belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers as well as the external acts like giving of one's wealth, maintaining the prayer, paying the Zakat, honoring promises and contracts, patience with whatever Allah decrees (like illness or poverty) and patience in obedience like being steadfast when facing an enemy (in *jihad*).

And perhaps the Prophet's answer to An-Nuwwaas includes all of these elements, because "good character" can mean adopting all the character traits of the *shari'a* – adopting the manners with which Allah nurtured His slaves via His book.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement in the hadith of An-Nuwwaas: "**Sin is that which bothers you and which you wouldn't like others to see:**"

This indicates that sin is that which affects the heart with unease, anxiety, fear, confusion and it is just not at peace with it. At the same time, it is something of which people disapprove such that they would be critical were they to witness it. This is the highest level of knowing sin when the issue is unclear: that which rejected both in the heart of the doer and among the people generally.

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As to the Prophet's words in the hadith of Waabisa: "**even though people may give you ruling after ruling:**"

This means that what bothers your heart is sinful and should be avoided, even if others gave you legal verdicts that it is not sinful. This is the second level: that which is rejected in the heart of the doer, but not by others. This was included in the definition of what is sinful. This is so when the one we're talking about is one of those whose heart has opened itself fully to faith until his heart became his personal *mufti* (one who gives verdicts) which supplies him verdicts by its mere feelings or instincts without a specific proof from the law. As for verdicts from an actual *mufti*, accompanied by proofs from the law, then it is obligatory on the seeker to submit to this verdict, even if his heart is not fully at ease with it. This is similar to some exceptions or permissions given in the law, like permission to break the fast when ill or traveling or shortening the prayers when traveling. In many such issues, the hearts of the uninformed may not feel at ease in doing these things, but that is due to their ignorance of the law, since the evidence is ironclad and in this case their unease in their hearts deserves no consideration.

As a general principle: In any matter in which there are clear texts, the only option for a believer is obedience to Allah and His Messenger and he should accept all such rulings fully and with an open mind and heart. Everything which Allah and His Messenger have legislated must be believed, accepted, implemented and submitted to. But, for those matters for which there is no clear and explicit text from Allah and His Prophet – nor from our examples among the Companions and first generations of this nation – a different approach is called for. If a believer, whose heart has opened fully to faith and is enlightened with knowledge and certainty, feels some unease with something and it bothers him because of some doubtful element or issue – and he did not find anyone to give him a clear verdict that it is permitted other than mere opinions or statements of one untrustworthy in his knowledge or religion or who is even known as one who acts on his own inclinations – in this case, the believer should go back to the criterion of "that which bothers him" – though those individuals are giving verdicts (indicating permission).

Hadith Number 28

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From the narration of ‘Irbaadh ibn Saariya, who said: The Prophet exhorted us strenuously. Our hearts trembled from his words and our eyes flowed with tears. So we said: “O Messenger of Allah, it is as if this is your final exhortation, so counsel us!”

The Prophet said: “**I advise you to beware of Allah and be conscious of Him and to listen and obey, even if a [former] slave becomes your ruler. Verily, whoever among you lives long will see a lot of disputes. So, what is upon you is my path (*Sunnah*) and the path of the rightly-guide Caliphs after me. Clamp down on this with your molars. And beware of all innovated matters, for every innovation is astray.**”

Reported by Abu Daud and At-Tirmidhi who said, a good, authentic hadith.

This hadith was reported by Ahmad, Abu Daud, At-Tirmidhi and ibn Majah. At-Tirmidhi said: a good, authentic hadith. Al-Hafidh Abu Naeem said: It is a good hadith, from the authentic narrations of the narrators of the Levant.

[Divider]

As for the narrator’s words: “The Prophet exhorted us strenuously:”

It was the Prophet’s practice to frequently exhort his Companions even outside of the weekly Friday sermons and those on the two Eids. But, the

Prophet would not do this every day or constantly, just occasionally. This was mentioned in the two books of Sahih, from the narration of Abu Wa'il who said: "Abullah ibn Mas'ood used to give us reminders every Thursday. A man said to him: 'O Abu Abdur-Rahman, we love your talks and look forward to them. I wish you would give us a talk every day.' Ibn Mas'ood said: 'The only thing preventing me from doing that is that I dislike that I might bore you or become tiresome and Allah's Messenger used to exhort us some days and leave us other days in order not to tire us.'"[1]

Very strong and direct expression is desirable in exhortations. It is more likely to be taken in and accepted by the hearts of the listeners. Strong expression means: finding ways to get the intended meaning clear understood by one's listeners, directly to their hearts. This should be done by choosing words which most effectively convey the intended meaning, are the most correct, the best sounding and those most capable of affecting the hearts of those who hear them. Thus, the Prophet's sermons were quite short and never lengthy. He conveyed massive meanings effectively and briefly.

[Divider]

And, as for the narrator's statement: "Our hearts trembled from his words and our eyes flowed with tears:"

These are two things with which Allah praised the believers when they hear a reminder, as Allah said: {Believers are none other than those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned…} Al-Anfaal: 2. And, {…and give glad tidings to the truly humble. Who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts tremble…} Al-Hajj: 34-35. And, Allah said: {Has not the time come for those who believe that their hearts should become fearfully and humbly focused on Allah's reminder and the truth which has come down?...} Al-Hadid: 16. And, He said: {It is Allah who has sent down the best discourse – a book, consistent and oft-repeated from which the skins of those who humbly fear their Lord tremble and then their skins and their hearts soften to Allah's remind-

(1) Bukhari, #70; Muslim, #2821

er…} Az-Zumar: 23. And: {And when they hear that which was sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears from the truth which they have recognized...} Al-Ma'idah: 83.

[Divider]

Their statement to the Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah, It is as if this is a final exhortation, so counsel us."

This shows that the Prophet had become quite emphatic in this particular exhortation, more so than in the past. The Companions began to feel like it was a final exhortation, for it is customary that one who is departing would be more strident in exhorting or giving advice before departing. This is why the Prophet ordered us to pray a prayer of "bidding farewell" (صلاة مودع)(2) The reason for this is that one who feels he is performing his final prayer will perform it in the most perfect way possible. It is also possible that the Prophet was giving a hint of his actual departure in that exhortation, as he did in his sermon at his final Pilgrimage.

[Divider]

They said: "…so counsel us!:"

They mean: give us a complete and all-encompassing advice. For, when they felt that he was giving his farewell, they felt the need for his final counsel from which they could continue to benefit after him. An advice which would suffice whoever held fast to it and give them success in this life and in the hereafter.

(2) At-Tabarani in "Al-Awsat," #4424, and its wording is: A man came to the Prophet and said: "O Messenger of Allah, give me a statement that I may take as a summary." So, the Prophet said: "**Pray as if it is your farewell prayer, for even if you don't see Him, He sees you. And, give up all hope for what is in the hands of others, that you may be free of need. And stay away from all that requires excuses.**" Sh. Al-Albaaniy mentioned this hadith in "As-Silasila As-Sahiha" and said, "This hadith to me is good (*hassan*) or authentic (*sahih*), for it has secondary narrations which support it." See #1914.

[Divider]

The Prophet then said: "**I advise you to beware of Allah and be conscious of Him and to listen and obey:**"

These two words include all success in this life and in the hereafter.

As for *taqwaa* (fear and consciousness of Allah), it suffices for success in the hereafter. And, as for listening and obeying those in authority among the Muslims, this is the guarantor of success in this world. So, with these two concepts, all interests of the slaves [of Allah] and their lives are put in order and by means of them they can seek Allah's aid in spreading the truth of Islam and obeying their Lord.

[Divider]

His words: "**even if a [former] slave becomes your ruler**" and, in another version the adjective "**Ethiopian**" was added.

This is something that has been narrated by many from the Prophet. It is among the future matters which Allah showed to His Prophet. It in fact occurred on many occasions that former slaves became judges, scholars even up to the supreme ruler of the Muslim nation. This is something few would have expected to ever happen, had the Prophet not given us this information in advance.

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In Sahih Al-Bukhari, from the narration of [3]Anas that the Prophet said: "**Listen and obey even if an Ethiopian slave with a head like a raisin becomes your ruler.**"

(3) Bukhari, #7142

And, in Sahih Muslim, from the narration of Abu Dharr, who said: "My dearest companion counseled me that I must listen and obey, even if he [the ruler] is an Ethiopian with amputated limbs."[4]

And there are many other hadith with similar meaning.

As for the Prophet's words: "**So, what is upon you is my path (*Sunnah*) and the path of the rightly-guide Caliphs after me:**"

So, we are ordered to hold fast to the way followed by the Messenger and the rightly-guided Caliphs who followed him. This includes all matters of belief, actions and words.

This is a complete path. For this reason, the first generations never used the word *Sunnah* except in the sense that covered all of that. Nonetheless, many later scholars use the word exclusively for beliefs, since they are the foundation of Islam and one who goes against them is in great danger.[5]

And the "the rightly-guided Caliphs," who we have ordered to emulate, are Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali. The Prophet described these successors as "rightly-guided" because they knew the truth and ruled according to it. He who is "guided" (راشد) is the opposite of misguided (غاوي), or one who knew the truth but acted contrary to it.

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(4) Muslim, #1837

(5) An example of that is how Imam Abdullah ibn Ahmad titled is book about Islamic beliefs "*As-Sunnah* and likewise Imam Ibn Abi 'Aasim and others. This is well-known. TN: Even though the real meaning of the word is much broader than that.

[Divider]

Then, the Prophet said: "**Clamp down on this with your molars:**"

An allegory for very intently sticking to something.

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As for the Prophet's statement: "**And beware of all innovated matters for every innovation is astray:**"

This is a warning to the entire nation against following any of the innovations which may arise.

The meaning of "innovation" (بدعة) is anything which is invented but which has no foundation in the *shari'a* (law) nor anything which points in its direction. If it has an origin in the *shari'a* or something which points to it, it is not called an "innovation" in religious terminology, even if it is something innovated (new) and the linguistic meaning would apply.

Those statements from the first generations applying positive adjectives to something "innovated" were said with the linguistic meaning of the word, not the terminological or *shari'a* meaning, such as:

Umar said, after he had gathered all those making the night prayer in the mosque in Ramadhan into a single congregation behind a single imam and when he saw them praying in that manner as he was leaving: "This is a wonderful innovation."(6) It is also narrated that Ubayy ibn Ka'b said to him: "This was not done before." Umar replied: "I know that, but it is good."

What he means is that this act has not been done exactly like this previously, but it has clear foundations which indicate [its lawfulness] it in the *shari'a*. Among them: The Prophet used to highly encourage the night prayer in Ramadhan. He, in fact, prayed it with his Companions (in congre-

(6) Bukhari, #2010

gation behind him) more than one night in Ramadhan, but then stopped and cited as his reason for stopping that he feared it may become an obligation upon the Muslims,[7]which it didn't.

Al-Hafidh Abu Naeem narrates with his own chain, from Ibrahim ibn Al-Junaid, who was told by Harmala ibn Yahya, who said: "I heard Ash-Shafi'i – may Allah have mercy on him – saying: 'Innovation is two: praiseworthy innovation and blameworthy innovation. Whatever is in accordance with the *Sunnah* is praiseworthy and whatever is at odds with the *Sunnah* is blameworthy.'" And, he cited Umar's statement: "This is a wonderful innovation."

What Ash-Shafi'i meant is exactly what we mentioned earlier: That blameworthy innovation has no origin in the *shari'a* which can support it – and this is always the meaning of the word in Islamic legal terminology. As for praiseworthy innovation, this is something new that is in accordance with the *Sunnah* or in other words that which does have something in the *Sunnah* which supports it. This latter is an "innovation" only in the linguistic sense, but not in the terminology of the *shari'a*.[8]

(7) Bukhari, #2012

(8) Ash-Shafi'i's statement: "Innovation is two types, praiseworthy and blameworthy…" is something that many have misunderstood and many of the partisans to innovations inflicted on Islam have cited it to support their innovations. So, when it is said to them: Do not commit innovation in Allah's religion. They say: But this is a "good" innovation or a praiseworthy innovation. I recorded from my Shaikh the diligent scholar Abdur-Rahman ibn Naasir Al-Barraak the following words:

"This statement of Ash-Shafi'i has an element of ambiguity which has allowed some of the partisans of the [type of] innovation which leads astray to cling to it. In actuality, it does not support their position in the least. The last part of his statement makes his intention clear, when he said: (So whatever is in accordance with the *Sunnah* is praiseworthy while whatever is at odds with the *Sunnah* is blameworthy.) Likewise, the fact that he cites Umar's statement, after he gathered the people behind a single imam in the night prayer of Ramadhan, when he said, "What a wonderful innovation." This shows clearly that what he referred to as (praiseworthy innovation) was only intended with the linguistic meaning of the word. This is because when something new comes about which is in accordance with the *Sunnah*, that means it came about for some need or reason and it is part of Islam. Innovation (بدعة) – in its terminological meaning – is that which has been added but is not from it (or "of it" or "part of it"). This is clearly understood from the Prophet's words: "**Whoever does any action not sanctioned by this affair of ours, [it] is rejected.**" Based on this, it is not correct to divide innovations into praiseworthy and blameworthy – in spite of the correct intention of

Another statement was narrated from Ash-Shafi'i which helps to explain the previous one. He said: "Innovations are of two types: that which is instituted and which is at odds with the book, the *Sunnah*, the narrations or [prior] consensus. This is an innovation of going astray. But, good things which are instituted and which are not at odds with any of that, this is an innovation which is not blameworthy.

the one who said that – because its apparent or literal meaning is at odds with the Prophet's words, "**The worst affairs are the innovated ones**" and "**Every innovation is astray.**" And, because it will become a slippery slope for the ignorant and the people of desire to attempt to legitimize their innovations in religion simply by their opinion that they are "good," and then take that is "religion.. It is "religion" for which Allah gave no permission.

TN: Add to this that once one neglects the parameters of the law in favor of what they believe is "good," then the only basis for distinguishing the good and acceptable from the bad and unacceptable is one's personal belief of what is "good." This is no different than "those who take their inclinations as their deity" mentioned in an earlier hadith.

How wonderful is what the Shaikh collected, clarified and explained. May Allah grant him much reward for our sake.

Hadith Number 29

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From the narration of Mu'adh, who said: I said: "O Messenger of Allah, tell me about an act which will get me into Paradise and keep me away from the fire."

The Prophet said: "**You have asked about an enormous issue. But, it is easy for whomever Allah makes it easy: Serve Allah, associating nothing with Him, maintain the prayer, pay the Zakat, fast Ramadhan and make Pilgrimage to the [Allah's] House.**"

Then, the Prophet said: "**Should I not direct you to the doors of all good? Fasting is protection, charity extinguishes misdeeds as water puts out fire and the prayer of one in the depth of the night…**" Then, the Prophet recited: {Their sides are repelled from their place of rest. They beseech their Lord in fear and hope. And of that which we have given them, they give. So no soul knows what delights have been hidden away for it, a reward for what they used to do.} As-Sajdah: 16-17.

Then, the Prophet said: "**Should I not tell you about the head of this affair, its main pillar and its pinnacle?**"

I said: Of course yes, O Messenger of Allah.

The Prophet then said: "**The head of this affair is submission, its main pillar is prayer and its pinnacle is military service *(jihad)*.**"

Then, the Prophet said: "**Should I not tell you about the foundation of all of that?**"

I said: "Of course yes, O Messenger of Allah."

The Prophet said: "**Restrain this.**" (referring to the tongue)

I said: "O Prophet of Allah, are we taken to account for things we merely say?"

The Prophet said: "**May your mother be bereaved of you! And are the people thrown into the fire on their faces – or on their noses – for anything but the fruits of their tongues?**"

Reported by At-Tirmidhi who said: "This is a good, authentic hadith."

The Prophet said: "**Should I not direct you to the doors of all good?**"

After explaining that admission to Paradise is contingent on fulfilling the obligations of Islam, the Prophet then directed the questioner to the avenues of additional good among the desirable and recommended acts. The best of Allah's allies (or friends) are "those brought near," i.e., those who seek closeness to Allah with extra good deeds above and beyond the obligatory.

[Divider]

His statement: "**Fasting is protection:**" (or a barrier)

The word translated as "protection" (جنة) means something in which one shelters themselves from harm, like a shield or (مجن), from the same root, which is a shield with which one protects oneself from blows. Likewise fasting, it shields or protects its practitioner from sinful acts in this world, as Allah said: {O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you that you may guard yourselves.} Al-Baqarah: 183. And since it is a shield against disobedience in this life, it is also a shield against the fire in the hereafter.

[Divider]

The Prophet's words: "**charity extinguishes misdeeds as water puts out fire and the prayer of one in the depth of the night:**"

The meaning here is that prayer in the night also extinguishes misdeeds like charity. This is indicated by a report of Imam Ahmad, from the narration of 'Urwa ibn An-Nazzaal from Mu'adh, who said: "We returned with the Prophet from the Tabuk Expedition …" and he proceeded to mention this hadith, but in which he narrated: "**Fasting is protection. And charity and the standing of a slave in prayer in the depth of night expiates misdeeds.**"(1)

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And, in the collection of At-Tirmidhi, from the narration of Bilal, from the Prophet, who said: "**Hold on to the night prayer. It is the way of the righteous ones before you. Night prayer brings you closer to Allah, stops you from sin and expiates any bad deeds. It also casts illness from the body.**"

He also reported something similar from Abu Umama and said: It is more authentic than the narration of Bilal.(2)

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(1) The author has made clear – in his discussion of the various routes of the hadith – that 'Urwa ibn An-Nazzaal did not hear it from Mu'adh.

(2) At-Tirmidhi, #3549, and he said: "This hadith (i.e., its chain of narration) is unique. We have no knowledge of this being of the narration of Bilal except via this route." Then, he indicated that his opinion of the hadith is that it is very weak. Next, he reported the version of Abu Umama which reports the Prophet saying: "Hold on to the night prayer. It is the way of the righteous ones before you. Night prayer brings you closer to Allah, stops you from sin and expiates any bad deeds." And he said: "This is more authentic than the narration of Idris from Bilal."

(I say): Sh. Al-Albaaniy followed him in this saying about the narration of Bilal: "It is very weak." See Dhaeef At-Targheeb, #624.

In summary, the hadith is valid via the narration of Abu Umama, but which doesn't contain: "It also casts illness from the body."

The verses from the Qur'an mentioned in the hadith: {Their sides are repelled from their place of rest. They beseech their Lord in fear and hope. And of that which we have given them, they give. So no soul knows what delights have been hidden away for it, a reward for what they used to do.} As-Sajdah: 16-17.

This means that the Prophet recited these two verses after mentioning the merits of prayer in the night in order to illustrate its importance and status.

[Divider]

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As for the Prophet's words: "**the standing of a slave in prayer in the depth of night:**"

Here he mentions that the best time for the night prayer (تهجد) is in the depths of night. It has been said that the meaning of the "depth of night" when unspecified is the middle of the night. But if it is specified as the "later depths of the night" (جوف الليل الآخر), then the meaning is the middle of the second half of the night or, put another way, the fifth sixth of the night. This is the time in which we have been told Allah descends to earth.

[Divider]

As for the words of the hadith:

Then, the Prophet said: "**Should I not tell you about the head of this affair, its main pillar and its pinnacle?**"

I said: "Of course yes, O Messenger of Allah."

The Prophet then said: "**The head of this affair is submission, its main pillar is prayer and its pinnacle is *jihad*.**"

Here, the Prophet informs us about three things: the head of this affair (i.e., Islam), its main pillar (or support) and its pinnacle. So, "this affair" means Islam. It has been expressed in another narration as the two testimonies of faith (which is how one becomes a Muslim). So, whoever does not fully accept the two testimonies – externally and internally – has no connection to Islam. As for the support of Islam, it is the prayer. By means of the prayer, the religion is established, just as the tent is held up by its center pole.

As for the pinnacle of Islam, meaning its highest manifestation or level, it is *jihad*. This indicates that military service is the best of all good deeds after the fundamental obligations, as has been stated by Imam Ahmad and other scholars.

[Divider]

The hadith continues:

"Then, the Prophet said: '**Should I not tell you about the foundation of all of that?**'"

I said: "Of course yes, O Messenger of Allah."

The Prophet said: "**Restrain this.**" (referring to the tongue)

This indicates that restraining one's tongue and keeping it within bounds is the foundation of all good and that whoever controls his tongue has controlled himself and kept himself in check and on the best way.

The meaning of "**the fruits of their tongues**" is the punishment for speaking what was forbidden to speak. We "plant" with everything we say or do, both good and bad, and then on the Day of Resurrection we will surely reap what we have sown. So whoever plants good things will reap honor but whoever plants evil will reap only regret.

Malik reported from the narration of Zaid ibn Aslam from his father that Umar: Entered upon Abu Bakr and he was yanking his tongue. Umar said: "Mah! May Allah forgive you." Abu Bakr said: "This has taken me to bad places."

Ibn Mas'ood used to swear by Allah, other than whom there is no deity, that: "There is nothing on earth more in need of long imprisonment than the tongue."

And, Yunus ibn 'Ubaid said: "I have never seen one whose tongue is properly controlled, but that I saw that same good quality in all of his actions."(3)

(3) If you want more about issues regarding the tongue, you can review the commentary on Hadith Number 15 in this book.

Hadith Number 30

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From the narration of Abu Tha'lab Al-Khushaniy, from the Prophet, who said: "**Verily Allah has made certain things obligatory, so do not neglect them. And, Allah has defined boundaries, so do not cross them. And, He has prohibited certain things so do not violate them. And, He kept silent on other things, out of His mercy and not forgetfulness, so do not delve into them.**"

A good (*hassan*) hadith, narrated by Ad-Daraqutniy and other.

Abu Bakr As-Sam'aaniy said: "This hadith represents a major fundamental principle in the religion." And he said: "Whoever acts upon this hadith has gathered reward (in the hereafter) and achieved safety from punishment. This is because anyone who fulfills the obligations, avoids the prohibited, stays within the boundaries and stays away from seeking what isn't there has collected all of the noble character traits and fulfilled all of the rights of Islam. This is because all of the laws of religion don't go beyond what was mentioned in this hadith."

As for the obligations: This means everything that Allah has commanded his slaves to do and required them to fulfill such as prayer, Zakat, fasting and pilgrimage.

As for the prohibitions: These are the things Allah has commanded us not to do and ordered us to avoid, stay far away from and never do.

As for Allah's boundaries which Allah forbid us to cross: In general, this means that what is within these boundaries includes everything which is permitted, whether it is obligatory, encouraged (*mandoob*) or neutral (i.e., simply permitted). Violating these boundaries means going beyond what is within them – the allowed – to commit that which Allah has prohibited.

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The word for boundaries (*hudood*) may also be used to mean the forbidden things themselves and so it could be said: "Do not come near Allah's boundaries," as Allah in fact said in the following verse: {These are Allah's boundaries, so do not approach them.} Qur'an: Al-Baqarah: 187

The word may also be used to denote the punishments which have been prescribed as deterrents to the most heinous prohibited acts such as: the boundary (*hadd)* of adultery, the boundary for larceny or the boundary for intoxication. This is the terminological meaning of the "boundaries" among the scholars of jurisprudence.

As for that on which Allah has kept silent: this means no ruling has been mentioned regarding it, neither as to it being lawful, obligatory, or otherwise. So, it is something in which there is ease and there is no stigma upon one who engages in it.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**So do not delve into them.**" (or "seek them"):

Among the matters to which this directive to refrain from delving into them are: matters of the unseen which we have been informed about and directed to believe in but the exact nature of which has not been divulged to us. Delving into such matters [beyond what we have been given] is what we have been directed to refrain from. To do so could bring about frustration or doubt or even escalate to the level of rejection [of truth].

In the Sahih of Muslim from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet, who said: "**People will go on asking until it is said: This is Allah. He created the creation. But who created Allah?" So whoever senses any of this, let him say: "I believe in Allah."**[1]

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Is-Haaq ibn Rahooya said: "It is not allowed to ponder regarding the Creator. It is fine for the slaves [of Allah] to ponder the created beings with what they have heard regarding them, but they should not go beyond that for if they do so they will become bewildered and lost."

(1) Muslim, #134. This is one of the formats of what a Muslim should say when afflicted with something from Shaitaan. Here is a summary of some of what a Muslim should say or do in such a situation, taken from authentic reports from the Prophet:

Say: I believe in Allah.

Say: I believe in Allah and his Messenger. (As was recorded in another narration in Sahih Muslim.)

To seek refuge in Allah along with ceasing to wander in thinking where the mind has no capability.

Say: Allah and his Messenger spoke the truth.

Say: (Allah is one. Allah is the self-subsisting. He bore no one nor was he born. And there is no one comparable to him.) Then, spit three times to the left and seek refuge from Shaitaan. This was reported in the collection of Abu Daud with a sound chain of narration.

He continued: "For [example] Allah has said: {And there is nothing at all but that it exalts Allah's praise.} Qur'an: Al-Israa: 44. So, it is not allowed for one to say, 'How do dishes exalt Allah's praise? Or bread? Or clothing? The knowledge is established that indeed all of these things exalt Allah's praise. But that is up to Allah to make their praise of him as he wishes and in the manner he wishes and it is not for people to delve into such things except with that which they know, nor to discuss this or other matters like it except with what Allah has informed us and to not attempt to go beyond that. So be diligent and conscious of Allah and do not delve into these unknowable matters. Delving into such things will be your downfall blocking you from the ways of truth."

This was all narrated by Harb from Is-Haaq, may Allah have mercy on both of them.(2)

(2) Our great scholar Sh. Muhammad ibn Salih Al-'Uthaimeen has an excellent and most beneficial fatwa for anyone whose heart is afflicted with doubt and Satan's whispers.

The Shaikh was asked about an individual into whose heart Shaitaan has whispered a great confusion in what pertains to Allah, Most High, and who is greatly fearful of that.

He answered, may Allah have mercy on him, saying: As for what was mentioned regarding the questioner's problem the outcome of which he fears, I say to him: Be assured that it will have nothing but good results. These murmurings are what the devil uses to attack the believers in order to shake the sound belief in their hearts, put them in psychological and philosophical distress and taint the purity of their conviction. His state is not the first to happen to the people of faith nor will it be the last. In fact, such things used to happen even to some of the Companions of the Messenger, so they asked him: "We encounter within us that which we would be horrified to even mention." The Prophet said: Is this what you have experienced?" They said: Yes. He said: "This is the pinnacle of faith." (Muslim) And, in the two books of Sahih that the Prophet said: "The devil comes to one of you and says: Who created such and such? And who created such and such… until he says: "Who created your Lord?" When it reaches this, let the believer seek refuge in Allah and desist." And, from the narration of Ibn Abbas that a man came to the Prophet and said: "I have thoughts to myself sometimes and I would rather be a lump of coal than talk about them." The Prophet said: "Praise to Allah who limited him to just whispers." (Abu Daud)

And so I say to this questioner: Once it is clear to you that these suggestions are from the devil and you fight and strive against them, know that they can never harm you as long as you fulfill your obligation in opposing them, rejecting them, stopping them in their tracks and not following them to where they would lead. This is as the Prophet said: "Allah has overlooked for my nation any kind of evil thoughts within, as long as they are not implemented or spoken about." (Muslim & Bukhari) So, if it were said to you, "Do you believe these troublesome thoughts and see them as truth? Do you see it as correct that Allah can be correctly described in this way?" and you were to reply as in Allah's words: {It is not

for us to speak about such things. You are exalted. This is nothing but a heinous falsehood.} Qur'an; An-Nur:16. And, you reject those thoughts (from the Satanic whispering) with your heart and your tongue and you become the quickest of the people to distance yourself from them – then they are nothing but whispers and random thoughts which come to your heart from the devil. In this way, the devil seeks to drag you down and to confuse you about the truth. Therefore, you will find that there are many things about which the devil does not plant such doubts or pointless questions. For example if you hear that in such and such a place there is a large city with many inhabitants – you won't typically find nagging doubts within you as to whether the city really exists or not. This is because the devil has no agenda or incentive here. Rather, the devil's mischief follows the very specific goals and agendas which he has. His top priority is to corrupt the beliefs of a believer. He strives endlessly to extinguish the light of knowledge and guidance in the believer's heart and to relegate him to the darkness of doubt and confusion. For this, the Prophet has prescribed the most effective medicine when he said: "Let him seek refuge in Allah and desist." For when he desists from such ramblings, he stays firm in is service to Allah, seeking and desiring what is with Allah – and all of the confusion leaves him by Allah's mercy.

So, turn away from all of this speculation and baseless meanderings and you will find yourself worshipping and serving Allah, beseeching him with your needs and glorifying him. So, these whispers which may come to your heart are not real. Rather, they are just random thoughts and satanic whispers which have no basis.

So, my advice to you in summary is:

Seek refuge in Allah and cease engaging in this mental guessing and speculation as the Prophet ordered us to do.

Remember Allah and stop yourself from continuing to engage in these misguided thoughts.

Busy yourself with worship and all manner of good deeds in obedience to Allah's order and seeking his acceptance. Once you turn completely to worship and good deeds with sincerity, you will completely forget the futile whispers which once engaged your heart – Allah willing.

Focus on seeking refuge with Allah and beseeching Allah to relieve you from this affliction.

This concludes the answer of the Shaikh to the questioner. (Majmoo' Al-Fatawa: 1/57)



Hadith Number 31

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From the narration of Sahl ibn Sa'd As-Saa'idiy, who said: A man came to the Prophet and said: O Messenger of Allah, direct me to a deed which, if I do it, Allah will love me and the people will love me." The Prophet said: "**Minimize your desire for things in this life so Allah loves you and minimize your desire for what is in people's hands so the people love you.**"

A good hadith reported by Ibn Hibban and others with a good chain of narration.

[Divider]

This hadith contains two great pieces of advice:

1. Abstain from much of the things of this world. This results in increased focus on Allah and love for Allah.
2. Abstain from [desiring or coveting] much of what other people have. This results in people trusting and loving you.

As for abstaining from the things of this world:

There are many references in the Qur'an which indicate the praiseworthiness of this and which condemn exaggerated desire for the things of this world. Allah, Most High, said:

{Rather, you prefer this life * But the hereafter is superior and more lasting.} Al-Alaa: 16-17

And, Allah said: {You desire the superficialities of this world, but Allah wants [for you] the hereafter.} Al-Anfal: 67

And, Allah said, regarding the story of Qarun (famously wealthy but misguided man in the time of Musa (Moses)): {And he came out to his people in all his splendor. Those who desire this life said: If only we had like what was given to Qarun. He is so fortunate. * Those who had been given knowledge said: "Woe to you. Allah's reward is better for those who believe and do good – but none will achieve that but the steadfast."} Al-Qasas: 79-89

And Allah said: {And they were joyous with the life of this world. But the life of this world compared to the hereafter is mere subsistence.} Ar-Ra'd: 26

And: {Say: the provision of this life is meager and the hereafter is superior for those who guard themselves and you will not be wronged in the slightest.} An-Nisaa: 77

And Allah said – narrating the words of the believer among the people of Pharaoh addressing his people: {The one who believed said: O my people, follow me and I will guide you to the path of right. * My people! The life of this world is nothing but a provision, but the hereafter is the realm of permanence.} Ghafir: 38-39

Allah has condemned one who sought only the things of this life with his deeds, his efforts and his intention (meaning he only did whatever he did looking for material gain). This was discussed previously in the commentary on the Prophet's statement: "Actions are according to intentions."

Hadith regarding condemnation of worldly things and their low status with Allah are very many:

In the book Sahih Muslim, from the narration of Jabir, that the Prophet entered the marketplace and the people were on his two sides. He came upon

a goat with stunted ears which was dead. He took it by the ear and said: "**Who wants this for a Dirham?**" They said: "We don't want it at any price. What would we do with it?" He said: "**Don't you want it to be yours?**" They said: "By Allah, even if it were alive, it has this defect (of stunted ears) so how about now that it is dead?" He said: "**By Allah, this entire world means less to Allah than this does to you.**"(1)

Also in Sahih Muslim, from the narration of Al-Mustawrid Al-Fahri that the Prophet said: "**This entire world is no more in relation to the hereafter than if one of you sticks his finger into the water [and then pulls it out] – let him look, how much does it extract?**"(2)

The meaning of *az-zuhd* (or abstaining or minimizing your desire for) with regard to a particular thing is to turn away from it because of your freedom from it and its little value to you and not being overly concerned or driven to acquire it. It said that something is "*zaheed*" (from the same root) when it is of little value or meaning.

The first generations as well as those who came after them have spoken about the interpretation of this abstention in this life and they used a variety of expressions:

Imam Ahmad narrated in his book titled "*Az-Zuhd:*" Abu Muslim Al-Khawlaani said: "Being abstinent with regard to the things of this world does not mean making the lawful unlawful. Nor does it mean wasting or losing wealth. The real meaning of shunning the things of this world (*Az-zuhd*) is that you put more trust in what is in Allah's hand than in what is in your own two hands. Then, if afflicted with some loss, you would have more hope in its reward from Allah and what was kept for you (in the hereafter) than for that property if it had remained with you."

(1) Muslim, #2957
(2) Muslim, #2858

Ibn Abi Ad-Dunya reported from the narration of Yunus ibn Maisara who said: "Abstinence with regard to the things of this life is not by making the lawful unlawful nor by losing wealth. Rather, being abstinent in this life means to put more trust in what is in Allah's hand than in what is in your own hand. And that your condition should you meet with some calamity (with regard to that wealth) would be identical to your condition had it never happened and that one who praises you is exactly equal in your eyes to one who condemns you – as long as you are upon the truth."

And so, abstinence or austerity with regard to the things of this world was interpreted as meaning three things, all of which are among the acts of the heart, not the physical body:

FIRST: That the slave puts more trust in what is in Allah's hand than what is in his own hands. This arises from the strength and certainty of faith. Allah has guaranteed the sustenance of his slaves and taken responsibility for it as He said: {And there is no creature on earth except that its provision is upon Allah.} *Hud*: 6

So whoever achieves this certainty, puts his trust in Allah with regard to all of his affairs. He is content with whatever Allah has prepared and destined for him. He is liberated from clinging to other created beings in terms of hope or fear. This then prevents him from seeking the things of this world in ways which are disliked (by Allah). So, whoever has these attributes is truly abstinent with regard to the things of this world, regardless of whether he is the wealthiest of men or possesses nothing material in this world at all.

SECOND: That the slave should be such that if he is afflicted by some worldly calamity and suffers loss of property, children or anything else in this life, his desire is focused on the future reward of what was lost in this life which may await him and which – unlike the things of this world – is permanent. This also arises out of a high level of certainty.

Ibn Umar narrates that the Prophet used to say in his supplications: "**O Allah, give us a share of fearing you which will come between us and**

disobedience to you and a share of obedience to you with which you cause us to reach your Paradise and a share of certainty with which you make simple the hardships of this life."(3)

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This is one of the signs of being abstinent with regard to the things of this world and minimizing your desire and attachment to them. Ali said: "Whoever is abstinent (unattached) toward the things of this life will find all misfortune or calamity to be of no significance."

THIRD: That one who praises him is no different than one who condemns him as long as he is upon the truth. This is one of the signs of being abstinent and unattached to this life and keeping one's desires in it from causing them to deviate from truth and what is right. As for one who is too attached to this life and places too much importance on it, he will love to be praised and will dislike criticism. When the two become one and the same – in truth – this shows clearly that other created beings have not taken more than they deserve in his heart. Rather, his heart is filled with love for truth and right and all that is pleasing to his Lord.

Various other expressions and definitions of "*Az-Zuhd*" have been reported from the first generations and they all go back to the essential meanings just mentioned.

[Divider]

Returning to the words of the hadith, the Prophet said: "**Minimize your desire for things in this life so Allah loves you…**"

This hadith shows that Allah loves those who are abstinent and not overly attached to the things of this life. Some of the first generations said: "The

(3) Reported by At-Tirmidhi, #3502, who said: This is a good but uncommon (few narrators) hadith. Sh. Al-Albaani rated it "hassan" (good) in Sahih Al-Jaami', #1268.

disciples said to 'Isa ("Jesus"): 'Teach us a single action for which Allah will love us.' 'Isa said: 'Loathe this world that Allah love you.'"

Allah has condemned those who love this world and put it ahead of the hereafter, as He said:

{Nay! Rather, you love the immediate. * And neglect the hereafter.} *Al-Qiyama: 21-22*

And he said: {You love wealth with an excessive love.} *Al-Fajr*: 20

And he said: {And he (i.e., mankind) is severe in his love for nice things.} *Al-'Aadiyaat*: 8

So, since Allah condemned those who love the things of this life excessively, we understand implicitly his praise for those who do not do so and remain independent of its influences and unattached to it.

Al-Hassan said: "Whoever loves this life and is made happy by it will find the love of the hereafter has left his heart."

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'Aun ibn Abdullah said: "This world and the hereafter in the heart are like the two pans of the scale. Just as much as one side is weightier, so this detracts from the other side."

It is important to note the condemnation of this life found in the Qur'an and the statements of the Prophet do not relate to the passage of time in the succession of day and night until the Last Day. Rather, Allah made that a cycle or a sign for those who wish to ponder or to give thanks.

Nor do such condemnations apply to the physical place which is this world, i.e., the earth. Rather, Allah made that as a shelter and a place of accommodation for the children of Adam. Nor do they apply to all that Allah has placed in the physical world such as mountains, oceans, rivers or min-

eral resources. Nor to what Allah has caused to grow on the earth, i.e. trees, plants and crops. Nor to the animals that Allah has spread therein and other forms of life. Rather, all of that is among the bounties of Allah which he has bestowed upon his slaves because of the many benefits they derive from them. Also because of the signs in them for their pondering and the fact that they point clearly to the oneness of the Creator and His omnipotence and greatness.

In fact, all of these condemnations of "this world" only apply to the ACTIONS of the children of Adam which take place in this world. This is because the majority of these actions are of a nature which is not ultimately praiseworthy. Rather many of these actions are ultimately harmful or at least of no benefit.

Allah said: {Know that the life of this world is only games, frivolity, ornamentation and competing in ostentation between you in wealth and children. Like a plentiful rain where the resulting plant growth amazed the farmers. But then they dry out and you see them yellowed. And then they are just broken stalks. And in the hereafter is severe punishment as well as forgiveness from Allah and acceptance. And the life of this world is nothing but indulgences which delude.} *Al-Hadid*: 20(4)

In any case, austerity in this world is a consistent feature of the prophets and messengers of Allah as well as Allah's closest allies and all those He loves.

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(4) There is no encouragement to abstain from the things of this life in the Qur'an or the statements of the Prophet which is not paired with an urging to focus on the matters of the hereafter – either by explicit text or implicitly. So, there is nothing to encourage asceticism or staying away from the bounties of this world except insofar as it is a means to devoting sufficient energy to the hereafter. Working hard for or in this life when accompanied with ample effort for the hereafter is by no means condemnable.

TN: In fact, to intentionally forgo an opportunity for wealth in this world would not constitute any kind of good deed. This is because this wealth represents an additional opportunity to worship Allah and serve your fellow humans with acts of charity, charitable trusts, sponsoring of students or soldiers and the like. The only exception would be one who feels they know in themselves that if given abundant wealth they would transgress and do more evil rather than good. In that case only, it may be appropriate for one to forgo or avoid wealth.

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The second advice:

Next, the Prophet said: "…**and minimize your desire for what is in people's hands so the people love you.**"

Al-Hassan said: "You will continue to be honored among the people – or the people will continue to honor and respect you – as long as you don't pursue what is in their possession. But, if you do that, they will make light of you, disregard what you say and dislike you."

There are many hadith from the Prophet which order us to try hard to avoid asking others for help and to seek to be independent and take care of our own needs. When one asks others for what they have, they begin to dislike and loathe him because wealth is something loved by all the children of Adam. So, when someone asks them to give up that which they love, their reaction is to dislike that person. As for one who is abstinent of what is in the hands of others and refrains from asking for it, they naturally like him and honor him. In fact, he can reach leadership among them in this way. As a Bedouin once said to the people of Basra: "Who is the leader (or elder) of the people of this town?" They answered: "Al-Hassan." He then asked, "By what means has he become their leader?" They answered, "The people needed his knowledge and he had no need for their worldly possessions."

Some of the first generations had a wonderful statement about this world and its inhabitants:

It is nothing but a corpse which has rotted

Upon which dogs descend determined to tear it apart.

So, if you keep away you are in a state of peace with those upon it

But if you also tear at it, its dogs will fight with you.

Hadith Number 32

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From the narration of Abu Said Al-Khudhriy that the Prophet said: “**No causing of harm nor retaliating with harm.**”

This is a “good” (*hassan*) narration reported by Ibn Majah, Ad-Daraqutny and others with a connected chain (to the Prophet). Malik reported in “Al-Muwatta” from the narration of ‘Amr bin Yahya, from his father, from the Prophet, with less than explicit connection because he omitted Abu Said (the narrator in the above), and it has a variety of other paths of narration which support each other.

This hadith was not in fact reported by Ibn Majah. Rather, it was reported by Ad-Daraqutny, Al-Hakim and Al-Baihaqy. The author mentioned that its various paths of narration reinforce each other (resulting in a sound hadith) – and it is as he said.

Abu ‘Amr ibn As-Salah said: “Ad-Daraqutny connected this hadith by a variety of paths and taken together, they strengthen the narration and produce a rating of “good” (*hassan*). Legions of scholars have accepted this hadith and used it as a source of evidence.”

Imam Ahmad has cited this hadith in jurisprudential discussion with this wording.

[Divider]

The Prophet's statement: "**No causing of harm (ضرر) nor retaliating with harm (ضرار).**"

They differed as to whether there is any difference in meaning between these to (closely-related) words or not. Some said that they both have the same meaning and using them both is just a means of emphasis. But the widely-held opinion is that there is a difference in meaning between the two words.

In one opinion, the meaning of the first one (*dharar*) is to bring harm to another by means of something from which the perpetrator himself benefits. The second one (*dhiraar*) is to bring harm to another by means of something which is of no benefit to the doer, such as one who withholds something from another where keeping that thing is of no benefit to him, but withholding it harms the one denied. This opinion was favored by one group among them Ibn Abdul-Barr and Ibn Salah.

Another view is that the first word means to cause harm to another who has done no harm to you while the second word means that you cause harm to one who previously caused you harm in a way which is not allowed in the law (i.e., retaliation in a disallowed manner).

In any case, the Prophet prohibited both forms of causing harm to another where there is no legal right. As for doing something legal and right which causes harm to another – either because he has broken a law which carried a prescribed punishment or because he has wronged another – this is not what is intended here at all. What is forbidden in this hadith is inflicting harm on anyone without any right to do so.

[Divider]

Within the broad meaning of the Prophet's statement "**No causing of harm…**" is that Allah never commanded his slaves to do anything which would cause them harm. Everything which Allah orders us to do is precisely what is most beneficial to our life (in this world) and our hereafter. Similarly, each and everything which Allah prohibits us is precisely what would corrupt and bring harm to our life (in this world) and our hereafter. Allah does not order us to do things which are harmful to our bodies and health. For this reason, one who is ill is not required to do the normal ritual cleansing with water. Also, one who is ill or travelling is released from the obligation of a required day of fasting (such as during Ramadhan).

In *Al-Musnad* (Imam Ahmad's collection), from the narration of Ibn Abbas, who said: "Allah's Messenger was asked: 'Which is the best religion?'" He said: '**That which is straight and moderate.**'" Aisha also narrated that the Prophet said: "**I have been sent with the way that is straight and moderate.**"(1)

We see a similar meaning in what was reported in both books of *sahih*, from the narration of Anas that the Prophet saw a man walking and was told: "He swore and oath that he would make the Pilgrimage on foot." So, the Prophet said: "**Allah has no need of his walking. He should ride.**" In another version, he said: "**Allah has no need of this person punishing himself.**"(2)

(1) Recorded by Ahmad (6/233) from the narration of Aisha and the hadith is also reported from several of the Companions, among them Jabir and Abu Umamah, but with weak chains of narration. However the part mentioned here likely reaches the level of validity when one takes into consideration the various reports and their paths of narration. And Allah knows best.

(2) Bukhari, 1865 and Muslim 164.

Hadith Number 33

From the narration of Ibn Abbas that the Prophet said: "**If people were given whatever they claimed, some men would claim the property and blood (lives) of others. Rather, proof is upon the claimant and an oath is upon he who denies.**"

A good hadith, narrated by Al-Baihaqi and others like this and part of it is in the two books of sahih.

The root of this hadith was reported in the two books of *sahih* from the narration of Ibn Jurai,j from Ibn Abi Malika, from Ibn Abbas, from the Prophet, who said: "**If people were given whatever they claimed, some people would demand the blood and property of others. However, the person against whom a claim is made must swear an oath.**" The version cited by the author was narrated by Ibn Salah before him in "*Al-Ahadith Al-Kulliyaat*" and he said, "Reported by Al-Baihaqiy with a good chain."

Imam Ahmad and Abu 'Ubaid cited as evidence that the Prophet said: "**proof is upon the claimant and an oath is upon he who denies.**" This shows that this phrasing was known and valid as legal evidence. There are many other hadith which give this meaning:

In the two books of *sahih*, from the narration of Al-Ash'ath ibn Qais who said: "I had a dispute with another man about a well and so we took it to the Prophet." He said: "**Your two witnesses or his oath.**" I said: "But then he will just swear and not care." The Prophet said: "**Whoever swears an oath by which he obtains some material gain but he was dishonest will face Allah and Allah is angry at him.**"

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Then, Allah communicated the verification of that (in the Qur'an):

{Those who gain by Allah's covenant and their oaths a small material gain will have no share in the hereafter, Allah will neither speak to them nor look at them on the Day of Resurrection nor will he purify them and for them is a painful punishment.} Al 'Imran: 77

Ibn Al-Mundhir said: "The people of knowledge are unanimous that the claimant must bring evidence and the respondent must swear an oath." He (Ibn Al-Mundhir) said: "The meaning of his statement 'proof is upon the claimant' is that he deserves what he has claimed when he supplies evidence. And, the meaning of his statement, 'an oath is upon he who denies,' is that it is accepted from him."

[Divider]

As for his statement: "**proof is upon the claimant and an oath is upon he who denies:**"

This means when one party lays claim to something which the other party claims for themselves and the latter denies the claim of the former. This is why the Prophet said in the beginning of the narration: "**If people were given whatever they claimed, some men would claim the property and blood (lives) of others.**" As for one who lays claim to something where no one else is claiming it or denying his claim, this is an easier case than the first one. Here, he must supply some form of evidence, but the evidentiary requirement is less than in the first case where another party also has a claim and rejects his claim.

This is reflected in several individual rulings of the law:

Lost Property: When someone is able to describe it accurately (without seeing it), it can be given to him without additional evidence – a point of consensus. But some of them said: "He should be given when it seems clear that he is truthful, but it is not obligatory." This is the opinion of Ash-Shafi'I and Abu Hanifa. Others say that it is obligatory to turn it over to one who can describe it accurately and this is the opinion of Malik and Ahmad.

Spoils of War: Whoever claims that something captured in war is his and was his property before that but had been taken by the enemy and provided some evidence to that effect is given what he claims. Imam Ahmad was asked about that: "Does that require some form of evidence?" He answered: "Definitely there must be something to support his claim and makes clear that it is his. Once that is known, the ruler must give it to him."

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Al-Khallaal narrated with his chain of narration from Ar-Rukain ibn Ar-Rabee,' from his father, who said: "My brother lost a horse at 'Ain At-Tamr (on a military expedition). Later, he spotted it in the corral of Sa'd. He said: 'That's my horse!' Sa'd said: 'Do you have any evidence?' He said: 'I have no evidence but if I call him, he will neigh (respond).' So he called the horse and it responded by neighing and he gave it to him."

It appears that this horse was taken by the enemy in battle and was subsequently re-captured by the Muslims (and divided with the spoils) or that it was found lost and was kept in a secure place for its owner like other lost property.

Property Taken Unjustly: When it is known that rulers have been unjust and larcenous and claims are lodged with the treasury for the return of what was taken [evidentiary requirements are relaxed]. Abu Az-Zanaad said: "Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz used to return unjustly taken property to its rightful owners without absolute proof. He would accept minimal standards

of proof. Once he knew that something had been taken unjustly from anyone, he would restore his rights without demanding detailed proof. This was based on his knowledge of the transgressions of the rulers before him upon the rights of the people. In fact, the entire treasury of Iraq was depleted from restoring what was taken unjustly from people in this way until extra resources had to be brought from Syria for that purpose."

Some of our fellow (scholars) mentioned that when seized property is recovered from highway robbers and other thieves, an accurate description of the property is sufficient to restore it to one who claims it was taken from him. Al-Qadhi mentioned in "*Khilaafihi*" that this is the apparent opinion of Imam Ahmad.

Hadith Number 34



[Divider]

From the narration of Abi Said Al-Khudhri who said, I heard Allah's Messenger say: "**Whoever among you sees a wrong, let him correct it with his hand. If he is unable, then with his tongue. If he is unable to do that then with his heart and that is the weakest form of faith.**" (Muslim)

This hadith was reported by Muslim from the narration of Qais ibn Muslim, from Tariq ibn Shihab, from Abu Saeed, from the narration of Ismail ibn Rajaa, from his father, from Abu Saeed, and he (Muslim) also reported from the narration of Tariq: "The first one to begin giving the 'Eid *khutba* (sermon) before the prayer was Marwan. So, a man stood before him and said: 'Prayer comes before the *khutba*.' And he said: 'What was there has been abandoned (meaning the practice established by the Prophet).' Abu Saeed said: 'As for this man, he fulfilled his obligation.'" And then he reported the above hadith.

[Divider]

This same meaning has been narrated from other pathways:

Muslim reports, from the narration of Ibn Mas'ood from the Prophet, that he said: "**There was no prophet who Allah sent to his people prior to me who did not have followers and companions who adopt his practices and follow his orders. Then, those are followed by others who say what they do not do and do what they have not been directed to do. So, whoever struggles against them with his hand is a believer. And whoever struggles against them with his tongue is a believer. And whoever**

struggles against them with his heart is a believer, but there beyond that there is not a single speck of faith."[1]

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Ibn Mas'ood heard a man say: "Whoever does not command what is right and prohibit what is wrong is doomed." So, Ibn Mas'ood said: "Whoever does not know right and wrong in his heart is doomed." He means that to know right and wrong is an obligation from which no one is exempt and that whoever fails to do even that is doomed.

[Divider]

As for opposing wrong with the hand (force) or the tongue (speaking out), these are obligations to the extent of one's ability.

Ibn Mas'ood said: "Some of you will soon live to see wrong where you have no ability to do anything about it except to let Allah know from your heart that you hate it."

So whoever witnesses wrongdoing and hates it in his heart is like one who never witnessed it if he is unable to struggle against it with his hand or his tongue. On the other hand, one who did not witness it but accepts it is like one who witnessed it and did nothing, even though he had the ability to struggle against it. Accepting wrongdoing is one of the ugliest of sins. This is because it even neglects rejecting wrong with one's heart, which is an absolute obligation upon every Muslim. There is no exemption from this for anyone for any reason.

So, rejecting wrongdoing with your heart is an obligation upon every Muslim in every situation, but struggling against it with deed or word is according to one's ability to do so.[2]

(1) Muslim: #50

(2) Shaikh of Islam Ibn Taimiya said in his book, "The Requirements of the Straight Path"

As for the Prophet's statement regarding one who struggles against wrongdoing [only] with his heart: "**and that is the weakest form of faith:"**

This shows that commanding what is right and prohibiting what is wrong [in the land] are part of faith. It also shows that one who is capable of any of the acts which are part of faith and performs them is superior to one who doesn't do them because he was unable (and thus excused). Another sign of this is the Prophet's statement when asked why he said that women are "deficient" in their religion: "**As for the deficiency in their religion, it is that they stay a number of days and nights without making prayer.**"(3) The reference is to the days on which she is menstruating. Even though she is prohibited from making prayer during those days, the Prophet nonetheless called it a deficiency in her religion. This shows that one who is capable of fulfilling an obligation and does so is superior to one who was incapable and so didn't fulfill it – even though he was excused under the law for not doing it. And Allah knows best.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**Whoever among you sees a wrong**:"

This indicates that the obligation to prohibit is bound to the fact of seeing the wrongdoing. So, what if the deed is concealed but he comes to know about it? From the explicit writings of Imam Ahmad in multiple narrations:

(1/272): "Rejecting wrong with one's heart means the belief that it is wrong and hatred for that wrong. When that is present, then there is faith in that heart. But, if the heart loses this knowledge of right and wrong and this rejection of wrong, then there is no remaining faith in that heart."

I say: "And this is one of the most important points that needs to be emphasized in our times – times when wrongdoing has become widespread and condemnation of it so lacking. A person may be excused for not struggling against wrong with his hand or with his tongue, but as for rejecting it with his heart, there is no excuse for any Muslim in neglecting that. And whoever does that may indeed lose all remaining faith in his heart.

So, every Muslim is required to reject wrongdoing with his heart even if he himself committed it or cooperated with those committing it – and this is the weakest possible faith."

(3) Reported by Muslim (#79 and #80) from the narration of Ibn Umar, Abu Huraira and Abu Saeed.

"He is not to deal with it nor should he investigate or delve into what he has suspicions about."

Also from Imam Ahmad in another narration: "He should only expose what is concealed when it is certain. So, for example, if he hears the sound of forbidden music and musical instruments and knows precisely the place from which it emanates, then he should prohibit the wrong because its occurrence is certain and the exact place and perpetrators are known so it is the same as if he had seen it." These are Imam Ahmad's words. And he said, "If he doesn't know the exact place it's coming from, then he is not required to do anything."

As for jumping over the walls (i.e., entering the houses) of those known to be gathering to commit forbidden things, the imams of Islam have rejected this, such as Sufyan Ath-Thawri and others. In fact, it is part of the "spying" which Allah has forbidden.[4] It was said to Ibn Mas'ood: "So-and-so has wine dripping from his beard!" He answered him saying: "Allah has forbidden spying on people."

Al-Qadhi Abu Ya'laa said in his book *Al-Ahkaam As-Sultaaniya* (Rulings Regarding Governance): "If the misdeed which it is believed is being concealed – based on reliable testimony – is such that a serious violation of rights may go undetected such as adultery or murder, then it is allowed to investigate and take steps to expose the deed out of fear that the violation of rights should be undetected. If it is a lesser level of misdeed, however neither investigation, spying or exposing what people have kept hidden is allowed."

[Divider]

Know that the obligation to command what is right and prohibit what is wrong, once it is established that it is obligatory, is done out a variety of motivations, such as:

(4) See Qur'an: Al-Hujuraat(49): Verse 12.

1. Out of hope for Allah's reward for fulfilling this obligation and performing this good deed,
2. Out of fear of Allah's displeasure and punishment for neglecting an obligation,
3. Anger for Allah's sake in seeing his boundaries transgressed,
4. Sincerity and best wishes for all believers and out of compassion for them,
5. A desire to save them from what they have fallen into which is exposing them to the possibility of Allah's anger and His punishment in this life and the hereafter, or
6. Simply out of his love and awe for Allah he is driven to fulfill this obligation to Allah and to his fellow man.

In any and all cases, it is mandatory to be gentle and compassionate in commanding and prohibiting. Ahmad said, "People are in need of concern and compassion when commanding or prohibiting, without harshness. Except for someone who flaunts his corruption and his disregard for the law, who loses this right." And, he said, "When the companions of Ibn Mas'ood passed by people who they saw doing something disliked, they used to say to them, 'Easy (or 'slow down'), may Allah have mercy on you!"

And, he said: "One must command and prohibit with gentleness and humility. And, if they comply he must have no further dislike or anger toward them. If he does, then this shows that his true intention was only to feel superior and "victorious" (meaning that his intention was not truly for Allah's sake).

Hadith Number 35

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From the narration of Abu Huraira, who said: "Allah's Messenger said: '**Do not envy one another, do not [conspire to] defraud one another, do not despise one another and do not turn your backs on one another. And let none of you ever attempt a sale in the midst of the [unfinished] sale of his brother. Be slaves of Allah and brothers.**

Every Muslim is the brother of every other Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor betrays him nor lies to him nor holds him in disdain.

Vigilant piety is here (and he pointed to his heart as he said it three times).

It is abundant evil for any Muslim to merely hold his brother Muslim in disdain.

Every Muslim is sacred (forbidden) to every other Muslim: his life, his property and his honor.'"

As for his statement: "**Do not envy one another:**"

Envy is something inherent in human nature and it is for one to hate that anyone of his type surpass him in any type of good.

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Based on this, people then fall into different groups:

Some strive to remove or destroy the good which has come to those they envy by transgressing upon them in word or deed. This is the envy which is condemned and forbidden.

Imam Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi reported, from the narration of Az-Zubair ibn Al-'Awwaam from the Prophet (who said): "**The diseases of the previous nations have also afflicted you: envy and hatred. And hatred is that which 'shaves off at the root' – the shaving off of your religion that is, not your hair…**"(1)

Abu Daud reported from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet, who said, "**Beware of envy for envy devours good deeds just as fire consumes wood.**" Or, he said: "**… grass.**"

Others, even though they feel envy for someone do not act upon their envy and commit no transgression in either word or deed against the one toward whom they feel envy. It is narrated from Al-Hassan that he said that there is no sin whatsoever upon such a person.

This group itself falls into two categories:

First are those who have such feelings in spite of themselves and are unable to purge it from their hearts (although they continue to refrain from acting upon it). Upon these there is no sin.

(1) Ahmad 1/164-165 and At-Tirmidhi #2510. There are many questions as to its authenticity which At-Tirmidhi alluded to. However, this hadith as also reported from the narration of Abdullah ibn Az-Zubair as reported by Al-Bazzaar with a good chain of narration as mentioned by Al-Mundhiri in At-Targheeb.

As for a similar narrated statement of the Prophet "The destruction of good relations between people is 'that which shaves off at the root.'" This is from a different and completely sound hadith as will come in the commentary of this chapter's hadith, if Allah wills.

Second are those who choose to entertain such thoughts. They repeat it, entertain it and have no problem with their desire that the good which has come to their fellow person be taken away. This most resembles a conscious determination to do something wrong. There is difference of opinion among the scholars regarding his culpability and possible punishment from Allah. In any case, it is highly unlikely that such an individual would last long in this state without actually committing some form of transgression against the object of his envy – even if just verbally – in which case his sinfulness is certain.

Still others, even though they may feel envy toward another, they do not wish for that good given to another to be taken away. Rather, they strive to acquire similar good for themselves out of a desire to be in the same position as that other. If said "good" is worldly in nature, then there is no particular good in that. However, if it is a religious "good," then this is something meritorious. The Prophet attested to this in the two books of *Sahih* when he said, **"[There must be] no envy except in two things: a man to whom Allah gave wealth and he gives of it for good by night and day and another man to whom Allah gave [knowledge of] the Qur'an and he stands with it (in prayer) by night and by day."**(2)

Another group, when they detect any envy within themselves, struggle mightily to remove it and to do good and positive deeds toward the object of their envy, make du'a for him and speak highly of him to others. All of this as part of his struggle to remove the disease of envy from his heart and to replace it with a genuine love for his brother and for the fact that he has this greater good than himself. This is of the highest levels of faith and whoever falls into this group is the true believer who (as the Prophet mentioned) "loves for his brother what he loves for himself."

(2) Al-Bukhari #73; Muslim #816

[Divider]

As for his statement, "**and do not defraud one another:**"

The word used here (النجش) has been interpreted by many scholars to mean as pertains to buying and selling, as the word is commonly used. The meaning is that someone causes the price of something to go up (at an auction for example or other type of sale or negotiation) without any real intention to buy it. He does so either to conspire to help the seller or to bring harm to the buyer by causing him to pay a higher price.

It is also possible that the meaning – and what is being prohibited in this hadith - is more general than that. The root meaning of the word is "arousing (or bringing about) something with trickery or deceit." For this reason the same word has been used to mean "hunter" because he rouses his prey with trickery and deception in order to flush it out into the open for the kill. In light of this, the meaning of the Prophet's statement would be "Do not deceive one another or interact with one another with scheming and trickery."

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Based on this interpretation, the prohibition in the hadith includes all manners of interaction which involve any form of fraud, trickery or deceit.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**do not despise one another**:"

Muslims are forbidden to despise one another for other than Allah's sake but rather based on the desires of the self. Allah made all Muslims brothers to one another and brothers should love one another and not despise one another. And Allah reminded us of His great favor upon us in granting us closeness between the hearts, saying: {And remember Allah's favor upon you when you had been enemies but He brought your hearts into close rela-

tionship whereupon you became, by His great favor, brothers.} Al 'Imran: 103

In the same vein, mischievous talk about others has been forbidden because of the enmity and hatred that it can cause between people and we have been highly urged to seek the means of enhancing harmony between people.

Imam Ahmad, Abu Daud and At-Tirmidhi all reported from the narration of Abu Ad-Dardaa' from the Prophet who said: "**Should I not inform you of something loftier than prayer, fasting and giving charity?**" They said: "Of course yes, O Messenger of Allah!" He said: "**Restoring harmony between people, for bad relations between people is that which shaves off at the root.**"(3)

As for hatred which is for Allah's sake, it is one of the strongest manifestations of faith and does not fall under what is prohibited here.

When there arose many differences of opinion in Islamic questions, this caused divisions among the people which in turn let to them hating one another and even cursing one another. Each group claiming that their hatred of the other is for Allah's sake. They may be, in this case, excusable or they may not be excusable. They may in fact be among those who follow their own desires and become negligent in seeking real knowledge of the matters based upon which they hate and separate. So what is obligatory upon the believer is that he be true to himself and be extremely careful and conscious of this and if something is the least confusing, ambiguous or unclear to steer clear of it completely, lest he fall into what has been forbidden in terms of rejection of and hatred for a fellow Muslim.

(3) Ahmad 6/444; Abu Daud #4919 and At-Tirmidhi #509 and he said: This is a sound (sahih) narration.

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[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**and do not turn your backs on one another:**"

Abu Ubaid said: "The meaning of this word (التدابر) is hostility and breaking of relations. The literal meaning is to turn one's back toward someone, (his face is away from him) and the meaning is cutting off all relations."

In the two books of *sahih*, from the narration of Abu Ayyub from the Prophet, who said: "**It is not lawful for any Muslim to end his relations to another Muslim for more than three days such that they encounter one another and this one turns away and that one turns away. And the better of the two is the one who starts first with the greeting.**"(4)

Abu Daud reported from the narration of Kharrash As-Sulami from the Prophet who said: "**Whoever cut relations with his brother for a year that is like spilling his blood.**"(5)

All of this is about cutting off relations for worldly reasons. As for doing so for legitimate religious reasons, this can be lawful even beyond three days as Iman Ahmad said explicitly and he cited as evidence for this - the story of the three who stayed behind.(6)

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(4) Al-Bukhari, #6077; Muslim #2560

(5) Reported by Abu Daud #4915. Al-'Iraqi said in Takhreej Ahaadith Al-Ihyaa (3/1265): It's chain is sound (sahih).

(6) The intent of the author here – may Allah have mercy on him – is that cutting relations for a worldly reason like personal insult, an argument or the like is not allowed to exceed three day's time. As for one who cut off relations with a wrongdoer because of his wrongdoing or with an innovator because of his innovation in Islam, such a one is not required to resume relations within three days. Rather, the cutoff of relations should extend as long as there is a legitimate benefit under the law, even if it is longer than three days. The Prophet himself boycotted (and ordered the Muslims to boycott) the three who were absent from the army without reason for 50 days. See Qur'an: At-Tauba(9): Verse 118.

Al-Khattabi mentioned that the boycotting of a father to his son or a husband to his wife and similar, when it is done to teach a lesson can also be lawfully extended beyond three days. Evidence for this is that the Prophet boycotted his wives for an entire month.

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As for the Prophet's statement: "**And let none of you ever attempt a sale in the midst of the [unfinished] sale of his brother:**"

The meaning is that when two parties have agreed on a sale, he offers the buyer his merchandise instead trying to get him to back out of the pending sale and buy from him instead.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**Be slaves of Allah and brothers:**"

The Prophet mentioned this by way of illustrating the wisdom or result of all that was mentioned before it. The meaning is that when the Muslims desist from envying one another, defrauding one another, despising one another, turning their backs on one another and ruining each other's sales transactions after the agreement, they will indeed be brothers.

Also in this is an implicit order to seek to acquire the traits and attributes by means of which all Muslims will become brothers across the board. That includes giving every Muslim their rights such as returning the greeting, blessing him when he sneezes, visiting him when he is sick, joining in his funeral procession, responding to his invitation, being the first with the greeting when you meet and being sincere to him in his absence (e.g., speaking only good about him).

At-Tirmidhi reported from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet who said, "**Give gifts to one another, for gifts drive out any heat (i.e., ill-will) in the breast.**"(7) Other narrated this statement as: "**Give gifts to one another, you will love one another.**"(8)

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**Every Muslim is the brother of every other Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor betrays him nor lies to him nor holds him in disdain:**"

This is found in Allah's statement: {The believers are none other than brothers, so restore harmony between your two brothers…} Qur'an: Al-Hujuraat (49): Verse 10. So, since the believers are all brothers, we have been ordered with regard to our relations and interpersonal affairs to cultivate all behaviors and manners which will facilitate and increase the close relations between our hearts. And we have been forbidden to engage in all matters which cause the hearts to be repelled from each other and to differ. That's what this is about.

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Also, it is of the nature of a brother that he should strive to bring some benefit to his brother and to keep harm away from him. One of the greatest forms of harm is oppression.

So in this area: a Muslim's betrayal of his brother. Muslims are commanded to come to the aid of their brothers.

(7) At-Tirmidhi #2130, but Al-Hafidh said in At-Talkhees (3/80): Its chain contains Abu Mi'shar Al-Madaniy – alone at his level – and he is a weak narrator.

(8) Al-Bukhari in his book Al-Adab Al-Mufrad #594. Al-Hafidh rated it "good" (hassan) in At-Talkhees (3/80) and Al-Albaaniy concurred in Al-Irwaa' #1601.

Also: a Muslim lying to his brother. It is not lawful for a Muslim to speak to his brother and lie. He is not allowed to speak anything but the truth.

Also: a Muslim holding his brother in contempt or having little regard or respect for him. This comes from arrogance. The arrogant sees himself as perfect but he sees others as deficient. Thus he has contempt for them and looks down on them. He doesn't deem them qualified to receive their rights from him nor that he should accept any of his rights from them if offered.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**Vigilant piety is here (and he pointed to his heart as he said it three times):**"

Here there is an indication that the truly honored among mankind with Allah are those who are pious. For it may be that one who is little acknowledged by people due to his weakness or his meager possessions in this world is in fact the greatest of men to Allah, greater than those possessors of apparent "greatness" in this world. Truly, what distinguishes people from one another in terms of station is according to their level of piety, just as Allah said: {…Truly, the most noble of you with Allah are the most pious…} Qur'an: Al-Hujuraat (49): Verse 13.

And, in *Sahih Al-Bukhari* from the narration of Sahl bin Sa'd who said: "A man passed by Allah's Messenger who said to one of those sitting with him: '**What do you think about this man**?' The man answered: 'He is one of the noble ones. By Allah if he proposes, he should be married, if he intercedes his intercession should be honored and if he speaks, his statement should be listened to.'" The narrator continued: "The Prophet was then quiet. Then, another man passed by and the Prophet again asked the man sitting with him: '**What do you think about this man?'** The man answered: 'O Messenger of Allah, this is one of the poor Muslims and befitting that if he proposes he not be married, if he intercedes that his intercession not be honored and if he speaks that he not be listened to.' Then, the Prophet said: **This**

(the second passer-by) is superior to the entire earth full of the likes of the other (the first passer-by)!"[9]

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[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**It is abundant evil for any Muslim merely to hold his brother Muslim in disdain:**"

This means it is sufficient evil for him to hold his Muslim brother in disdain. This is because one only has this attitude based on arrogance and arrogance is among the most heinous forms of evil. In *Sahih Muslim* narrated from the Prophet, that he said: "**No one will enter Paradise who has a single speck of arrogance in his heart.**"[10] In another hadith reported by Muslim and others wherein Allah Himself is speaking, He says: "**Pride is my cloak and greatness is my garment so whoever competes with me in either of those, I will punish them.**"[11] So, competing with Allah in one of His exclusive and unique attributes is not appropriate for created beings! And, it is enough evil.

In *Sahih Muslim* from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet who said: "**Whoever said, 'The people are finished (as in completely corrupt or doomed)' is the most corrupt among them.**"[12] Malik said: "If he said that out of sadness caused by what he sees in the people – meaning in their practice – then I see nothing wrong with that. But, if he says that feeling proud of himself and believing that the people are inferior to him (because of what he sees in them), then this is the hateful attitude which was forbidden." This was mentioned by Abu Daud in his *sunan*.

(9) Al-Bukhari #5091
(10) Muslim #91
(11) Muslim #620
(12) Muslim #2623

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**Every Muslim is sacred (forbidden) to every other Muslim: his life, his property and his honor:**"

This is among the matters that the Prophet used to mention in sermons in the greatest gatherings. He mentioned it during the Farewell Pilgrimage: on the day of sacrifice, on the day of Arafat and on the second day of the days of *tashreeq*.

In *Sunan Abi Daud* as narrated from some of the Companions that they were traveling with the Prophet when one man fell asleep. Some of them grabbed hold of a rope near him and startled him. The Prophet said: "**It is not lawful for any Muslim to scare another Muslim.**"(13)

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And, in the two books of *Sahih* from the narration of Ibn Mas'ood from the Prophet who said: "**If you are three, two of you must not confer without the third for that will sadden him.**"(14) This wording is Muslim's.

All of these texts show that a Muslim must not bring harm to another Muslim without right in any way whether it be by word or deed. Allah also said: {Those who harm believing men or believing women with what they don't deserve have undertaken a slander and a blatant sin.} Al-Ahzaab (24):58.

A man said to Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz: "Make the elder Muslim a father, the young Muslim a son and the one in between a brother. So, which of those would you like to treat badly?"

(13) Reported by Abu Daud #5004 and Al-Albaaniy rated it sound (sahih) in Sahih Al-Jaami #7658

(14) Al-Bukhari 690; Muslim #184

And, from the words of Yahya ibn Mu'adh Al-Raazi: "Let every believer enjoy from you three: if you don't benefit him, at least don't harm him, if you don't give him joy, at least don't give him grief and if you don't praise him, at least don't condemn him."

Hadith Number 36

From the narration of Abu Huraira from Allah's Messenger who said: "**Whoever relieves a believer of some calamity in this world, Allah will relieve him of one of the calamities on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever brings ease to someone in hardship, Allah will make things easy for him in this life and the next. Whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this life and the next. Allah is in the aid of His slave as long as the slave is in the aid of his brother.**

Whoever traveled a path in pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make his path to Paradise easy. No group sits in one of the houses of Allah reciting Allah's Book and studying it with one another but Allah sends tranquility down upon them, envelopes then in His mercy, the angels shield them and Allah mentions them to those with Him.

Whoever's deeds slow him down, his lineage will not speed him up."
Reported by Muslim.

Both books of *Sahih* reported from the narration of Ibn Umar from the Prophet who said: "**Every Muslim is a brother to every other Muslim. He does not oppress him nor surrender him. Whoever is concerned with his brother's needs, Allah is concerned with his needs. Whoever gives relief to a Muslim, Allah will relieve him from one of the hardships on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever conceals [the faults of] another Muslim, Allah will conceal [his faults] in this world and on the day of Resurrection.**"[1]

(1) Bukhari #2442; Muslim #2580

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As for the Prophet's statement: "**Whoever relieves a believer of some calamity in this world, Allah will relieve him of one of the calamities on the Day of Resurrection:**"

This also indicates that there is such a thing as difficulties in the hereafter. Allah described the Resurrection Day as "a most difficult day, saying: {And for the rejecters, it is a day most difficult.} Al-Furqan (25): 26

As for the "relief" (تيسير) mentioned in the hadith pertaining to this life, the reference is to financial difficulty. And so it can mean two things: First allowing (i.e., a debtor) some extra time when he is in difficulty. Allah has commanded us to do this, saying: {And if he is in difficulty, then an appropriate extension until his situation is better.} Al-Baqarah (2): 280

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Or, it could mean dropping the debt altogether or by giving him that which will relieve the hardship he is experiencing. Both of these are great noble deeds.

In the two books of *Sahih* from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet, who said: "**A businessman used to give loans to people. If he saw one of his clients in hardship, he would say to his workers: Overlook his debts that perhaps Allah will overlook for us. So Allah overlooked for him [any bad deeds].**"(2)

Muslim reported, from the narration of Abu Qatada from the Prophet who said: "**Whoever would be happy for Allah to save him from calamities on Resurrection Day, let him provide relief to one in difficulty or drop his claim against him.**"(3)

(2) Bukhari #2078; Muslim #1562

(3) Muslim #1563

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**Whoever conceals [the faults of] another Muslim, Allah will conceal [his faults] in this world and on the day of Resurrection**:"

This meaning can be found in many texts.

It was narrated from some of the early generations that they said: "I have met people who had no faults but they mentioned the faults of others. Then, people attributed various faults to them. And, I met other people who had some faults but they refrained from calling attention to other people's faults and the people forgot about their faults." Or, as they said.

In support of this: from the narration of Abu Barza from the Prophet who said: "**I say to all of you who have believed with your tongues but faith has not entered your hearts: Do not backbite Muslims nor follow and expose their hidden flaws. For whoever follows and exposes their hidden flaws, Allah will follow his flaws. And, if Allah follows your hidden flaws, you will be scandalized right in your home.**" This was reported by Imam Ahmad and Abu Daud[4] and At-Tirmidhi reported a similar meaning from the narration of Ibn Umar.[5]

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As for the Prophet's statement: "**Allah is in the aid of His slave as long as the slave is in the aid of his brother**:"

Al-Hassan Al-Basri sent some of his companions to take care of some needs of a man. He said to them: "Go and get Thabit Al-Bunani and take him with you." So, they went to Thabit but he said: "I am in *I'tikaaf* (at type of

(4) Ahmad 4/420, Abu Daud #4880 and Al-Albani rated it sound (sahih) in Sahih Al-Jaami', #7984

(5) At-Tirmidhi #2032, and in the same chapter are other hadith of the same meaning from the narration of Thawbaan, Al-Barraa', Buraidah and Abdullah ibn Abbas.

seclusion exclusively for worship)!" They went back to Al-Hassan and told him what Thabit had said. Al-Hassan said: "Say to him: 'Oh shortsighted one! Did you not know that your footsteps in pursuit of helping your brother Muslim are superior to Pilgrimage after Pilgrimage?'" So, they went back to Thabit and told him that whereupon he abandoned his *I'tikaaf* and went with them.

Abu Bakr used to milk sheep for people in his neighborhood. Then, when he became Caliph of all the Muslims, a young girl said to him: "Now you must not milk them." But Abu Bakr said: "On the contrary! I truly hope that this new responsibility of mine will not change me or any [good] deed that I have been doing." Or, as he said.

Some men used to provide this service because it was the custom of the Arabs that women never milked sheep and they considered that something untoward. So, when some men were away on business or other trips, the women they left behind needed someone to do this task for them.

Umar also used to always check on widows and bring them water in the evening. Once, Talha saw Umar enter the house of a woman. He went there the next day and discovered that she was a very old woman who was blind and disabled. He asked her: "What does that man do in your house?" She said: "For a long time now that man has been checking on me, bringing me what I need and removing refuse from my house."

Abu Wa'il(6) used to check on the elderly women in his neighborhood every day. He would buy for them whatever they needed and what would make them comfortable.

(6) Abu Wa'il: His name is Shaqeeq ibn Salamah. He is one of the senior Taabi'een (the generation which followed the Companions). He was alive during part of the Prophet's life, but he never saw him. He narrated reports from the first four Caliphs, although there is some dispute as to whether he narrated anything from Abu Bakr (the first one). He is among the most knowledgeable of the narrations of Ibn Mas'ood. He died before the year 100. Adh-Dhahabi said: This nobleman was a leader in both knowledge and practice. See: As-Siyar 4/161

Mujahid said: “I accompanied Ibn Umar on a journey so that I might serve him, but he kept serving me instead!”

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Many of the righteous people of the first generations used to impose a condition on someone traveling with them that they must be the one to serve the other.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet’s statement: “**Whoever traveled a path in pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make his path to Paradise easy:**”

Traveling a path in pursuit of knowledge includes traveling and actual physical road. For example walking to a circle of knowledge with scholars. It also includes undertaking the means or “routes” to acquiring knowledge such memorizing, studying, researching, writing or seeking deeper understanding of the subject matter – and other such non-physical paths by means of which one can acquire knowledge.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet’s statement: “**Allah will make his path to Paradise easy:**”

The intended meaning may be that Allah makes the acquisition of knowledge which is being sought easy since knowledge itself is a path which leads to Paradise. Or, the intended meaning may be that when a seeker of knowledge does so purely for Allah’s sake that Allah will make it easy for him to benefit from that knowledge and live and act according to it. This, then, becomes the cause of getting to Paradise.

It may also be made easy for one who sincerely seeks knowledge to learn other things beyond what was intended, which in turn benefit the seeker and become that which gets him to Paradise.

This could also include the making easy of the actual physical path to Paradise on the Resurrection Day with all of its trials and difficulties like the bridge over hell-fire and the difficulties which come before it and after it.

So, there is no path to knowledge of Allah, to gaining his satisfaction or achieving the success of being close to Allah and next to Him in the hereafter other than beneficial knowledge – the knowledge with which Allah sent all His messengers and which He sent down in His Books.

[Divider]

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As for the Prophet's statement: "**No group sits in one of the houses of Allah reciting Allah's Book and studying it with one another but Allah sends tranquility down upon them, envelopes then in His mercy, the angels shield them and Allah mentions them to those with Him**:"

This shows the desirability of gathering in the mosques to recite and study the Qur'an.

The Prophet has informed us that Allah rewards those who gather in his houses teaching one another the Qur'an with four things:

1. Tranquility will descend upon them.
2. They will be enveloped in mercy. Allah said: {Surely, the mercy of Allah is near the doers of good.} Al-A'raab (7): 56
3. The angels surround and shelter them.

4. Allah mentions them to those present with him. And Allah's "mention" of his slaves means his praise of them before the assembly of the angels and his extolling their virtues before them.

These four rewards are for all those who gather together to learn and remember Allah.

{Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**Whoever's deeds slow him down, his lineage will not speed him up:**"

The meaning here is that it is actions which allow any slave to achieve the higher levels in the hereafter. So, if one's works (or lack thereof) are slowing him down to reach higher levels with Allah, his lineage or nobility will not be able to hasten him to those levels. Allah has made the rewards according to actions, not according to one's lineage, as he said: {And when the horn is sounded, then there are no relations between them on that day nor will they ask one another.} Al-Mu'mineen (23): 101.

In the two books of *sahih* from the narration of Abu Huraira who said that the Prophet said, when the verse {And warn your closest relatives.} (Ash-Shu'araa (26): 214 was communicated to him: "**O members of Quraish, buy your souls from Allah. I cannot help you with Allah in any way. O Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib, I cannot help you with Allah in any way. O Safiya, paternal aunt of Allah's Messenger, I cannot help you with Allah in any way. O Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad, ask me whatever you wish, but I cannot help you with Allah in any way**."(7)

(7) Bukhari #4771, Muslim #206

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This is supported by another narration, also in the two books of *sahih* from the narration of 'Amr ibn Al-'Aas that he heard the Prophet say: "**The family of Abu so-and-so are not my kin. My allies are Allah and the righteous among the believers.**"[8] This shows that being close to Allah's Messenger does not happen by blood relationship no matter how close. Rather, it is only achieved by belief and righteous action. So, whoever is greater in faith and good deeds is closer in relation to Allah's Messenger no matter who they are or where they are from. In this same vein, some said in poetry:

I swear, a person is only according to his religious practice,

So never neglect pious vigilance relying on your family ties.

Islam ennobled Salman the Persian,

But paganism debased the blood brother Abu Lahab.

(8) Bukhari #5990; Muslim #215

Hadith Number 37

From the narration of Ibn Abbas from Allah's Messenger from that which he narrated from his Lord, Blessed and High, saying:

"**Allah the Almighty has written all the good deeds and all the bad deeds. Then, he explained: So whoever intended to do a good deed but didn't do it, Allah records one complete good deed. If he intends a good deed and then does it, Allah records ten complete good deeds up to seven hundred times or even higher multiples. And, if he intends a bad deed but doesn't do it, Allah records one complete good deed. And if he intends a bad deed and then actually does it, Allah records one bad deed.**"
Bukhari and Muslim

This hadith was reported in both books of *sahih* from the narration of Ibn Abbas. In the version in Muslim, there is an addition at the end: "**…or Allah may erase it. None will meet their destruction from Allah except the doomed.**"

There are many hadith which contain similar meanings.

So these narrations included mention of the recording of good deeds and bad deeds as well as intentions to good deeds or bad deeds so this adds up to four types:

FIRST: The doing of a good deed. The good deed is added to 10 like it as many as 700 times or even more times than that.

SECOND: The doing of a bad deed. This is simply recorded as-is, meaning a single bad deed with no increase.

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This is as Allah said: {Whoever brings a good deed, his is ten like it, but whoever brings a bad deed is not repaid except in equal amount and they are not done wrong.} Al-An'am (6):160

However, bad deeds can be magnified sometimes because of the high status of the time or the place. A group among the companions used to be wary of living in the center of Makka for fear of committing some transgression there. Among them were Ibn Abbas, and Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn 'Aas, and Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz did likewise.

Is-Haq ibn Mansoor said: "I asked Ahmad if there was anything in any hadith to indicate that a bad deed could be recorded as more than one?" He answered: "No. We have not heard any such thing except with regard to Makka because of the honor of that place." And Is-Haq ibn Raahooyaa used to say the same thing as Ahmad on this question.

THIRD: If one intends to do a good deed, it is recorded as a complete good deed even if he doesn't end up actually doing it, as in the above hadith of Ibn Abbas. And from the narration of Khuraim ibn Faatik: "**Whoever intended to do a good deed but did not do it, and Allah knows that he truly intended it and was determined to do it, has one complete good deed recorded for him.**"[1] This indicates that the meaning of "intend" here is a real determination to commit the good deed, not just a thought which just occurs to someone without determination and planning for the deed.

When this intention is accompanied by statements and actual effort, the reward is assured and he becomes the same as the one who successfully carried out the deed. This concept was narrated by Abu Kabsha from the Prophet who said: "**This world belongs to four individuals: 1) a slave who Allah provided with wealth and knowledge. He fears Allah with**

(1) Reported by Ahmad 4/322 and Ibn Hibban #6171

regard to these favors. He strengthens his ties of family with them and Allah knows his truthfulness. This is the best possible station. 2) a slave who Allah provided knowledge but not wealth. But, he is truthful in his intention. He says: If only I had wealth I would do with it just as so-and-so (referring to the previous category). So, by this intention of his, his reward and that of the other are equal. 3) a slave who Allah provided wealth but did not provide him with knowledge. He behaves recklessly with his wealth without knowledge. He does not fear Allah with regard to it nor does he utilize it to strengthen his family ties. Allah knows of no truthfulness in him. This is the most detestable station. 4) a slave who Allah provided with neither wealth nor knowledge, so he says: If only I had wealth, I would do with it just like so-and-so (referring to #3). So, by this intention of his the sin of these two is equal." Reported by Imam Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah.(2)

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Some interpreted the words "**his reward and that of the other are equal**" to mean equal in the original reward of the deed but not the increase and so the multiplication of the good deed is only for the one who actually did the deed but not the one who intended it but never did it. This is because if they were truly equal than the one who merely intended a good deed but didn't do it would receive the ten-fold reward and this goes against many reliable texts.

FOURTH: One intends to do a bad deed but never follows through. A hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas indicates that it is recorded as ten full good deeds. And, from the narration of Abu Huraira, "**He only abstained from it for my sake…**"(3) This shows that what is meant here is one who is capable

(2) Ahmad 4/230; At-Tirmidhi #2325; Ibn Majah #4228 and At-Tirmidhi said: This hadith is hassan sahih.

(3) TN: Muslim #205. The context of this hadith is a conversation between Allah and the angels. They had just asked Allah about a person who intends to do a bad deed. Allah replied

of a bad deed and forms an intention to do it, but then abstains from it for Allah's sake. There is no doubt that a single good deed is recorded for this individual because of his abstaining from the bad deed he was tempted to commit is itself a good deed.

What about if he intended a bad deed but then abstained from doing it either out of fear of people or out of a desire to impress them? It has been said that he would earn a bad deed for this since giving fear of created beings priority over fear of their Creator something forbidden – as is doing something good with the intention of drawing praise or attention of created beings. So, even if such things are paired with abstaining from a bad deed, they are still in and of themselves bad deeds. Thus even holding back from a bad deed – but with a wrong reason or motive which is at odds with monotheism and piety – can be a bad deed deserving of punishment.

Another case is one who intended a bad deed, took actual steps to carry it out but was prevented from doing it for some external reason. One group mentioned that he would still be subject to punishment for that based on the Prophet's statement: "**Allah has overlooked for my nation whatever [evil] thoughts may occur within them, as long as they neither speak nor act on it.**"[4] Clearly, one who strove to commit the bad deed but was unable to do so has "acted" on his intention. Similarly, the Prophet's statement: "**When two Muslims come at one another with their swords, both the killer and his victim are in hell-fire.**" Those with the Prophet asked him: "OK, this is the killer, but what about the victim?" The Prophet answered: "**He was determined to kill the other one.**"[5]

THAT THEY SHOULD WAIT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT AND THAT IF HE PROCEEDED TO COMMIT THAT BAD DEED TO RECORD IT AS A SINGLE BAD DEED BUT IF HE REFRAINED FROM DOING IT, THEY SHOULD RECORD IT AS ONE GOOD DEED. THEN, ALLAH MADE THE STATEMENT WHICH WAS CITED.

(4) BUKHARI #5269; MUSLIM #127

(5) BUKHARI #31; MUSLIM #2888

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What if his intention comes to an end and his determination to commit the deed dies down without any cause on his part, is he culpable for the evil which he intended but never committed? This needs to be divided into two parts:

FIRST: If the intention was just a passing thought and was never accepted, nor any firm intention formed to carry it out – to the contrary, he disliked it and was repulsed by it – then this is forgiven. This is like the lowly and wicked thoughts which can come to one's mind about which the Prophet was asked and he answered: "**That is clear faith.**"(6)

SECOND: An actual intention, accompanied by a plan which is settled within the self and accepted by it. This is of two types:

The first type: An independent action among the actions of the heart such as doubts regarding monotheism, prophethood, resurrection or other issues of rejection or things which negate belief. This exposes one to punishment as they may become an open rejecter (disbeliever) or a hidden rejecter (hypocrite) because of them.

Also appended to this type are sinful acts of the heart such as loving things which Allah hates, hating things which Allah loves, arrogance and conceit or pride.

The second type: Acts which are not actions of the heart but rather actual physical actions of the body such as fornication/adultery, stealing, drinking alcohol, murder, slander and the like. In such a matter, for someone to earnestly

(6) Muslim #126.

TN: The Prophet meant that being concerned about such wicked thoughts, repelled by them and doing one's best to push them away and not obey them is "clear faith." The questioner had thought that he was doomed because of this kind of evil thought coming to him sometimes even in prayer. The Prophet's answer relieved and worry that he had because since he was concerned and came to ask the Prophet, it showed the strength of his faith in that he was opposing them and not just enjoying them, entertaining them or even forming an intention to follow through with them.

want to commit them and actually begin formulating a plan to carry them out, there are two opinions among the scholars as for culpability in that.

The first opinion: He is culpable for that. This opinion was favored by many scholars among the specialists in the law, in the science of narrations, the logicians, many within our school of jurisprudence and others. One evidence they cited is Allah's statement: {... Rather, he holds you accountable for what your hearts have earned...} Al-Baqarah (2): 225. And: {...Know that Allah is fully aware of all that is within you, so beware of him...} Al-Baqarah (2): 235. They also cited statements of the Prophet such as: "**Sin is that which pricks your conscience and which you would hate for people to watch you doing.**"(7) And so they interpreted other statements of the Prophet such as "**Allah has overlooked for my nation whatever [evil] thoughts may occur within them, as long as they neither speak nor act on it,**"(8) to mean those passing thoughts, but they said that as for whatever of that remains in the heart, is accepted and an intention is forming to do it, these are actual deeds and is not overlooked.

Among this group, some of them said: He is punished for such things in this life with anxiety and depression. And, it has been said: It will be part of his account-taking on Resurrection Day. Allah will question him about it but then overlook and forgive it, that questioning itself being its only punishment. Ibn Jarir chose this last opinion.

The second opinion: No one is ever culpable for a mere intention. This opinion is ascribed to a text by Ash-Shafi'i and is the opinion of Ibn Haamid of our school, sticking to the general meanings of the texts.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**or Allah may erase it:**"

This means that an actual deed may be recorded by Allah as a single bad deed, or Allah may erase it entirely for whatever reasons he wishes, such as

(7) This is the 26th hadith in this collection.

(8) This is in both Bukhari and Muslim as was mentioned recently.

repentance of the doer, his asking for forgiveness or because of some good deed done by the same individual.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**None will meet their destruction from Allah except the doomed:**"

Meaning that after all this grace from Allah and his expansive mercy wherein he multiplies good deeds and overlooks much of the bad, no one will fail in this except one determined to commit evil and who turns away from doing good and with no desire to do so.

For this reason, Ibn Mas'ood said: "Woe to those whose ones have outweighed their tens!"

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Imam Ahmad, Abu Daud, An-Nasaa'I and At-Tirmidhi reported from the narration of Abdullah ibn 'Amr who said that the Prophet said: "**There are two traits, which if any Muslim tracks them well he will enter Paradise though they are very easy. Nonetheless, those who practice them are few. He exalts Allah (saying *subhana Allah*) ten times after every prescribed prayer, praises/thanks Allah (by saying *al-hamdu lillahi*) ten times and glorifies Allah (by saying *Allahu akbar*) ten times. So those are 150 [each day] on the tongue but 1500 on the scale. Then, when he goes to bed he again does those three things 100 times. That is 100 on the tongue but 1000 on the scale. So, which one of you does 2500 bad deeds every day?**"[9]

(9) Ahmad 2/160; Abu Daud #5065; At-Tirmidhi #3410; An-Nasaa'I 3/74. At-Tirmidhi said: This is a good, sound hadith and Al-Albaani rated it sound (sahih) in Sahih A-Targheeb wa At-Tarheeb #606

Some of the Companions asked the Prophet: "How is that they are so easy and yet those practicing them are few?" The Prophet answered: "Shaitaan (the devil) comes to each of you when he is in prayer and reminds him of this or that need and so he doesn't say them. And he comes to you when you go to bed and puts you to sleep so you don't say them."



Hadith Number 38

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From the narration of Abu Huraira who said that the Prophet said: “**Allah has said: Whoever bears enmity toward an ally of mine, I have hereby declared war on him. And there is nothing more beloved to me with which any slave of mine can seek to come close to me than [all] that which I have made obligatory upon him. Then, my slave continues to come closer to me with extra good deeds until I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his legs with which he walks. Whenever he asks me, I give him and if he were to seek refuge in me, I will grant him refuge.**” Bukhari

Al-Bukhari was the only one among the hadith collectors who reported this hadith. It has been said that this is the greatest hadith regarding the allies of Allah (أولياء الله).

[Divider]

As for the Prophet’s statement: “**Whoever bears enmity toward an ally of mine, I have hereby declared war on him:**”

Allah is informing this person that there is a state of war between them. This is because he has adopted a position of war against Allah by bearing enmity against his allies among mankind. Rather, it is obligatory to support them and forbidden to oppose and do wrong to them. This is similar to our

obligation to be in opposition to Allah's enemies and it is forbidden to give loyalty to them or side with them against the believers.

To put this in context, any act of disobedience is in fact an act of war against Allah. Whoever disobeys Allah has entered a state of war against Allah. But the more despicable the sin, the more blatant is the war with Allah. That's why Allah called those who deal in interest and highway robbers those "at war with Allah and His Messenger," because of the heinous nature of their oppression of Allah's slaves and their great efforts to bring corruption to the land. Similarly, those who bear enmity to Allah's allies, Allah has undertaken their defense and He loves them and helps them. So, whoever bears enmity to any of them has in fact begun open enmity to Allah, Most High, Himself.

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[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**And there is nothing more beloved to me with which any slave of mine can seek to come close to me than [all] that which I have made obligatory upon him. Then, my slave continues to come closer to me with extra good deeds until I love him:**"

After mentioning that bearing enmity to those closest to Allah is in fact open warfare with Allah, he mentioned some of the characteristics of those "allies" whom it is forbidden to bear enmity toward and for whom loyalty and support is a must. First, he mentioned the means by which a slave of Allah comes closer to Allah.

The linguistic origin of the word *wilaya* translated here are being "allies" is closeness. The origin of *'adaawa* translated here as "enmity" is farness or being distant. So, the allies of Allah are those who achieve closeness to Allah by means of all that which brings one closer to Allah. On the other hand, Al-

lah's enemies are those who have become estranged from Allah. He has put them at a distance from him due to actions of theirs which precipitate that.

Then, he divided his allies, or those brought near, into two groups:

FIRST: Those who seek closeness to Allah by fulfilling everything that Allah has made obligatory. That includes fulfilling all obligatory acts and abstaining from all forbidden acts because all of that is part of the definition of "**all that I have made obligatory upon him.**"

SECOND: Those who go beyond the obligatory to additional good deeds in pursuit of closeness to Allah.

This shows clearly that there is no path which can take one closer to Allah and to the state of being his ally and among those he loves except that path of obeying all that Allah has legislated on the tongue of his Messenger. As for any who claim a relationship with Allah, his love and closeness to him without this, it is clear that they are lying in what they claim. In fact, the pagans of Makka (to whom Allah's final messenger was initially sent) believed they were seeking to come closer to Allah by worshipping the idols! Allah reported this to us in the Qur'an, quoting them as saying: {... we only worship them that they might bring us closer to Allah in proximity...} Az-Zumar (39): 3.[1]

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Similar to this is what Allah told us about the rejecters of truth among the Jews and the Christians and that they said: {... we are Allah's sons and his

(1) This is no different from what some of the ignorant among the Muslims do until today. They believe that the "saints" who are in their graves can help them or harm them in some way. So, you find some of them beseeching these dead people, seeking their aid, sacrificing in their honor and asking for their intercession for all of their needs. This is blatant polytheism which completely removes whoever does it from Islam and into paganism. The proofs of that are too numerous to be listed and too well-known to need mention. So, whoever knows Allah in his heart will completely break all ties of paganism from his heart. And, whoever ponders the Qur'an will have no remaining doubt about that. All praise and gratitude is Allah's and it is Allah alone whose aid we seek to find guidance and remain firmly upon the truth. Amin!

beloved…} Al-Ma'idah (5): 18. This, even as they stubbornly continued to reject Allah's Messengers, to do what Allah had prohibited them and to neglect His orders.

This is why Allah mentioned in this hadith that His allies are on two levels:

The First Level: Those who seek closeness through all that Allah has made obligatory. This is the level of those in the middle and of the forerunners, those of the right hand.

The Second Level: This is the level of the forerunners and those brought near. They are the ones who continued pursuing closeness to Allah beyond the obligatory by striving to do extra acts of good and to abstain even from some of the lawful where it is questionable of disliked in the law as an extra precaution. This brings the love of Allah, as was said in this hadith: "**Then, my slave continues to come closer to me with extra good deeds until I love him.**" So, whoever Allah loves, He grants him love of Allah, obedience to Allah, along with consciousness and remembrance of Allah, all of which brings about his closeness to Allah and his close relationship with Allah.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**When I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his legs with which he walks:**"

The meaning here is that when one strives to come closer to Allah, first with all that Allah has made obligatory and then follows that with extra efforts and righteous acts, Allah will elevate him from the level of *imaan* to the level of *ihsaan*. In this state, he worships Allah with a high level of awareness and consciousness and accountability as if he sees Allah in front of him. (That is how it is described in another hadith.) His heart is then filled with knowledge of Allah, Most High, along with love, glorification, fear, awe and the utmost regard for Allah. This causes strong feelings of closeness to Allah

and yearning until this knowledge becomes so sharp that it as if he is seeing Allah before him with his physical eyes.

When the heart is filled with consciousness of Allah, this pushes out all that conflicts with that. So, the worshipper has nothing left of his own inclinations and desires nor any will except the will to do everything which pleases Allah his Lord. At this point, his speech is remembrance of Allah, his movement is what Allah orders and what pleases him. So, if he speaks in accord with Allah and what pleases Allah. If he looks, he does so in accord with Allah, and if he strikes he does so only in accord with Allah. This is the meaning of the next statement in the hadith: "**become his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his legs with which he walks.**"(2)

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And as for those who hold some other strange interpretations of these words such as the presence of the almighty within the body of the devotee – they have gone into the deviation of disbelief and atheism with their belief of the unity of all or the admixing of Allah with his creation – and Allah and his Messenger are innocent of them!

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**Whenever he asks me, I give him and if he were to seek refuge in me, I will grant him refuge:**"

This means that this beloved of Allah has a special station with Allah which includes that whenever he asks Allah for something Allah will give it to him and if he seeks refuge in Allah from something, Allah will give him refuge. When he calls, Allah responds because of his nobility and station with his Lord.

(2) This is further explained in some versions of this hadith as: "And so by me he hears and by me he sees…" Meaning, by my granting of this success to him and by my aid to him.

Many among the righteous first generations were widely known as being among those whose prayers are answered. Saad ibn Abi Waqqaas was one of them. One day, a man told a lie to do an injustice to Saad. He said: "O Allah! If he is lying, blind him and cause him to live long and expose him to trials." The man was afflicted with all of that until, when he was very old, he would be seen trying to seduce young girls on the street. The people said about him: "An old man facing trials. He has been afflicted by the supplication of Saad!"(3) Another time, he invoked Allah against a man he heard cursing Ali (ibn Abi Talib). The man never even got up from his place when a stray camel came along and trampled him with is front and hind feet until he killed him.

A woman once raised a case against Said bin Zaid, attempting to take his land. She claimed that he had taken it from her. He beseeched Allah saying: "O Allah! If she is lying, blind her and take her life on her own land." She became blind after that and then one day as she was walking on her land, she fell into an open well and died.(4)

(3) Bukhari #755. His lie was that he falsely accused Saad of something he didn't do.

(4) Muslim #1610. In the unabridged version of the current book, the author cited a number of other stories about those whose prayers are answered.



Hadith Number 39

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From the narration of Ibn Abbas, that the Prophet said: “**Allah has overlooked for me and for all of my nation mistakes, forgetfulness, and anything they were forced to do.**”

A good (*hassan*) hadith reported by Ibn Majah, Al-Baihaqiy and others.

This means that Allah has lifted the burden of these things in his final message to mankind as one of his honors conferred on his final Prophet Muhammad.

[Divider]

As for the Prophet’s statement: “**mistakes, forgetfulness, and anything they were forced to do:**”

As for mistakes and forgetfulness, Allah stated clearly in the Qur’an that he has overlooked them: {… Our lord! Do not hold us responsible if we forget or make a mistake...} Al-Baqarah (2): 286. And: {…And there is no sin upon you for what you have done by mistake, only for that which your hearts have intended…} Al-Ahzaab (33): 5. And, in the two books of *sahih* from the narration of ‘Amr ibn Al-‘Aas who heard the Prophet say: “**When the rulers passes judgment after full and diligent effort and is correct, he receives two rewards. If he does full and diligent effort but is incorrect, he gets a single reward.**”[1]

(1) Bukhari #7352; Muslim #1716

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As for being forced to do something under duress, Allah also specifically mentioned in the Qur'an that it is overlooked.(2) Allah said: {Whoever rejects faith in Allah after having believed – except one who was forced to do so while his heart was firm upon faith - ...} An-Nahl (16): 106. And: {…No believer takes the rejecters as allies over the believers. Whoever does so has nothing whatsoever to do with Allah – except one who was only taking necessary precautions against them…} Al 'Imran (3): 28.

The meaning of (mistake) here is that one intended one thing but his action turned out to be something else. For example he may intend the killing of an enemy soldier but in actuality ends up killing a Muslim.

The meaning of (forgetfulness) here is that one is conscious of something but forgets it while doing the act.

Both of them are overlooked and forgiven. This means that there is no sinfulness involved. However, that doesn't negate that there could be legal consequences. For example if one forgets to perform the required ablutions before making prayer and prayed thinking that he had done it, there would be no sin upon him for that. But, if he later realized that he had made that prayer without this required element and in an inappropriate state, then it would be required for him to repeat that prayer properly. Similarly, if he forgot a prayer and then realized that he had done so, he would be required to make it up even after the fact, as the Prophet said: "**Whoever slept through a prayer or forgot it should make it up when he remembers. No other expiation is required.**" And then the Prophet recited: {… and establish the prayer for my remembrance} Taha (20): 14.(3)

(2) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists regarding and act of disbelief (e.g., prostrating to an idol) and the stronger opinion is that it, too, is overlooked and forgiven. As for an utterance which constitutes disbelief but which was said under duress, they are unanimous that the individual is blameless.

(3) Bukhari #572; Muslim #684

Hadith Number 40



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From the narration of Ibn Umar who said: “The Prophet held my two shoulders and said: ‘**Be in this world as if you are a stranger or just passing through.’”** And Ibn Umar used to say: “When you reach the evening do not await (or expect) the morning and when you reach the morning do not await the evening. Take [advantage] from your health before your illness and from your life before your death.” Reported by Bukhari.

This hadith is a foundational principle in not exaggerating our hopes for matters in this life. It is not fitting for a believer to take this world as some kind of permanent abode or get too comfortable in it. Rather, he should live in this life as if he is only on one leg of a journey and get his gear in order for the next stage.

The Prophets and their followers, the believers, have agreed on this advice.

Allah, Most High, said,reporting the words of a believer among the people of Pharaoh: {O, my people! The life of this world nothing but indulgence for a time, while the hereafter is the permanent realm.} Ghafir (40): 39

And, the Prophet used to say: “**What do I have to do with this world? My analogy in relation to this world is like a rider who took a nap in the shade of a tree, but then continued on his way leaving it behind.**”[1]

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(1) Reported by At-Tirmidhi #2377, who said: This is a good, sound hadith.

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Some wise man said: “I am amazed by one, who although he is soon to leave this world and proceed to the hereafter, is so busy with that which he is about to leave and neglectful of where he is headed.”

And, since this world isn’t a permanent abode for the believer, his condition in this world should be one of two:

Either he should be as a stranger, temporarily settled in a foreign country;

Or, he should be as a traveler passing through, not settled at all.

For this reason, the Prophet advised Ibn Umar, that he should be in one of these two states:

THE FIRST: The believer should think of himself as a stranger in this world and picture his stay here as one staying in a foreign country. Thus, his heart will not be overly attached to the strange country of temporary residence. Rather, it will be attached to his true abode to which he will be returning. He is only living in this world in order to prepare his supplies for his return to his true land.

One who lives with this awareness has no ambition in this world except to load up on that which will benefit him after his return home. So, he will not compete with the people of this realm for power nor will he fret if he is not strong among them.

THE SECOND: The believer should think of himself in this world as a traveler passing through and not a permanent resident at all. Rather, he is just moving between two waypoints of a journey – until that journey reaches its end: death.

So, whoever lives in this state, is most concerned with preparing provision for the rest of his journey and will have limited desire to increase his possessions in this life.

[Division]

As for Ibn Umar's advice in this matter, it is taken from the hadith of this chapter of which he is the narrator. The hadith includes that hopes in this live should be short-term. So, when one reaches the afternoon, he doesn't expect the morning and when he reaches the morning, he doesn't expect the evening, based on his knowledge that his term (in this life) could end before that.

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[Divider]

As for Ibn Umar's statement: "Take [advantage] of your health before your illness and of your life before your death:"

He means that you should take advantage of every opportunity to do good deeds when you are healthy before sickness comes between you and that – and throughout your life, before death comes between you and that.

In *Sahih Al-Hakim*, from the narration of Ibn Abbas, that Allah's Messenger said to a man who he was advising: "**Take full advantage of five things before five other things: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before your business and your life before your death.**"(2)

So, it is crucial for every believer to hasten to do good deeds before a time comes when he is unable to do them or something comes between him and those good deeds. When one is no longer able to do the good deeds he desires to do, there is nothing left for him but sorrow and regret. He wishes to return to his former condition in which he was able to do more good deeds, but his wishes are of no avail.

(2) Al-Hakim 4/306 and he said: "This is a sound hadith according to the criteria of Muslim and Bukhari." Al-Albaaniy also rated it sound (sahih) in Sahih At-Targheeb wa At-Tarheeb, #3355.

Allah, Most High said: {And turn back to Allah your Lord and submit to him before the punishment comes to you and then you will not be helped (54) And follow the best of what has been sent down to you from your Lord before the punishment comes to you suddenly while you are unaware. (55) Lest anyone say: Woe to me for my negligence of nearness to Allah though I was one of those who mocked [such things]. (56) Or that one might say: If only Allah had guided me, I would have been among the vigilant. (57) Or that one might say, when they see the punishment: If only I had another chance so I could be among the doers of good. (58)} Az-Zumar (39): 54-58

And Allah said: {Until, when death comes to one of them, they say: My Lord! Send me back. (99) That I may do good in that which I left behind. No! It is a word and he has spoken it – and awaiting them is a purgatory until the day they are resurrected.} Al-Mu'minoon(23): 99-100

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And Allah said: {And spend (give) of that which we have provided you before death comes to one of you and he says: My Lord! If only you delayed this a little longer so that I might give charity and be among the righteous. (10) And Allah will never delay for any soul when his term has come. Allah is fully informed of all that you do. (11)} Al-Munafiqoon(63): 10-11

Take advantage of free time with the honor of bowing,

For your death may indeed be sudden.

How many healthy people have I seen without any illness

Whose healthy souls just suddenly slipped away?(3)

(3) These two verses are by As-Subki and found in Tabaqaat Ash-Shafi'iya 2/235. And he attributed them to Imam Bukhari, the collector of the first compiled book of sahih.

Hadith Number 41

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From the narration of Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn Al-‘Aas who said that the Prophet said: “**None of you believes until all of his inclinations are in harmony with that which I have brought.**”

The Shaikh (At-Tirmidhi) said: “This is a good, sound hadith and we reported it in *Kitaab Al-Hujja*.”

Its chain of narration is sound (*sahih*).

The meaning of this hadith is that no person is a believer complete in faith as is incumbent on them until all of his likes, dislikes and inclinations are all in harmony with the message brought by the Prophet. That means that he loves all that this message commands and hates all that it has prohibited.

Allah mentioned this idea more than once in the Qur’an. Allah said: {So no, by your lord they do not believe until they seek your ruling in any issue of difference or difficulty among themselves. Then, they find no unease within themselves regarding what you have ruled and they comply fully.} An-Nisaa (4): 65. And, Allah said: {It is not for any male believer or female believer, once Allah and his Messenger have adjudicated any matter, that they should have any choice in their matter.} Al-Ahzaab (33): 36. Allah has condemned those who hate what Allah loves or love what Allah hates. He said: {That is because they hated what Allah sent down and so their deeds were nullified.} Muhammad (47): 9. And, he said: {That is because they persisted in what Allah disliked from them and hated his acceptance – and so Allah nullified their deeds.} Muhammad (47): 28.

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So, that which is obligatory upon every believer is:

To love all that Allah loves. And this love of necessity means that he will deliver on all that has been made obligatory upon him. Then, if his love goes beyond that, he will add to that praiseworthy deeds loved by Allah but not made among the obligatory, and that will be an additional honor for that person.

Also, to hate all that Allah, Most High, hates. And this hatred of necessity means that he will desist and stay away from everything that Allah has made forbidden. If his hatred for all that is bad goes beyond that, he will further desist from things disliked by Allah but which were not made among the forbidden, and that will be an additional honor for that person.

True love means harmony and agreement in what is loved and what is hated between the one who loves and the object of his love. This is as Allah said: {Say: If your parents, you children, your brothers, your spouses, your clan, wealth which you have acquired, business for which you fear its decline or dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and his Messenger and fighting in his path, then just wait until Allah brings his response…} At-Tauba (9): 24. So, it is a necessary consequence for anyone who loves Allah sincerely in his heart that he loves with sincerity all that Allah and his Messenger love, hates what Allah and his Messenger hate, is pleased with what pleases Allah and his Messenger, detests all that Allah and his Messenger detest and that all of his constituent parts in fact act in accordance with this love and this hatred. So, if he commits any act which contradicts that, meaning that he committed something which Allah and his Messenger hate or neglected something that Allah and his Messenger love – assuming such act was among the obligatory acts and that he had the ability to do it – this points to a flaw or shortcoming in his true and obligatory love for Allah. So, in that case, it is necessary for him to repent to return once more to the true, complete and obligatory love.

Yahya ibn Mu'adh said: "He is not truthful who claims love for Allah but then does not maintain the boundaries of Allah."

An early poet said:

You disobey the deity while claiming love for him.

This – by my life – by measure, is disgraceful.

If your love was truthful, you would obey him.

For the one who loves is to the one he loves obedient.

Thus, every act of disobedience comes about by giving one's desires and inclinations priority over love for Allah and his Messenger. Allah described pagans as doing exactly this in several places in the Qur'an:

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Allah said: {So, if they did not respond positively to you, know that they only follow their desires. And who is more lost than one who follows his desires without guidance from Allah?} Al-Qasas (28): 50

The same goes for deviations and innovations in Islam: those who do this give their own desires priority over the law. This is why they are referred to as "the people of desires."

The same goes for love of individuals. What is obligatory is that this, too, be subservient to and in accordance with the message brought by Allah's Messenger. So, what is obligatory upon every believer in this regard is that he love Allah and that he love all those who Allah loves such as the angels, the messengers and prophets, the leaders of righteousness, the martyrs and all righteous people generally. Thus, one of the signs of one who has tasted the sweetness of faith is that he loves another and does so exclusively for Allah's sake.

It is forbidden to have allegiance to the enemies of Allah and to whoever Allah hates generally, as we have discussed previously. In this way, one's religion becomes truly and completely for Allah.

Hadith Number 42

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From the narration of Anas ibn Malik who said: I heard Allah's Messenger say: "**Allah, Most High, said: 'O son of Adam, whenever you call out to me and put your hope in me, I forgive whatever you have committed without hesitation.**

O son of Adam, Even if your sins reach to the clouds in the sky but then you sought my forgiveness, I will forgive you.

O son of Adam, if you come to me with sins which nearly fill the earth but then meet me in a state of not associating anything with me, I will come to you with enough forgiveness to nearly fill the earth.'"

Reported by At-Tirmidhi who said: A good hadith.

This hadith was only reported by At-Tirmidhi and its chain is not bad.

The hadith explains three causes of receiving Allah's forgiveness:

First: Supplication Accompanied by Hope

Supplication is among the things we have been commanded to do and for which a response has been assured, as Allah said: {And your Lord said: Call out to me that I respond to you…} Ghafir (40): 60. And, in the four books of *as-sunan* from the narration of An-Nu'maan ibn Basheer from the Prophet who said: "**Supplication equals worship,**" then he recited the verse just mentioned.(1)

(1) Reported by Abu Daud #1479, At-Tirmidhi #3247, An-Nasaai' in Al-Kubraa, 6/450 and Ibn Majah #3828. At-Tirmidhi said: "This hadith is good, sound."

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So, supplication is a cause which results in a response, but that is when all of its conditions are fulfilled and all things which can block that are avoided. Among the most important conditions are: consciousness of the heart and hope for a response, as At-Tirmidhi reported from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet who said: "**Call out to Allah while you are certain of a response, for Allah does not accept the supplication from a heart which is unmindful or not serious.**"(2) For this reason, the slave has been prohibited from various conditionals in supplication: "**Let no one of you say: O Allah forgive me if you wish. Rather, ask clearly and convincingly, for no one can make Allah do other than what he wishes.**"(3)

[Divider]

As for the Prophet's statement: "**whenever you call out to me and put your hope in me, I forgive whatever you have committed without hesitation.**"

This means that in this case, no matter how great your past sins and misdeeds may be, they are not that great to Allah nor beyond his forgiveness.

Second: Asking for Forgiveness:

…even if one's sins reached to the clouds – or according to another interpretation – as far as they eye can see.

(2) At-Tirmidhi #3479. It's chain contains Salih Al-Murriy. Nonetheless, Al-Albani rated it "good by means of other reports" in Sahih At-targheeb wa At-Tarheeb #1653.

(3) Bukhari #6339, Muslim #2678 and 2679

And we should mention here an error which is very widespread among Muslims today. It is that many people, when they wish to supplicate for their brother in front of him, will say things like, "May Allah reward you well, if Allah so wills" or "Allah grant you success, if Allah so wills and other similar statements. This is exactly what we have been prohibited from doing! The correct way is to remove any references to Allah's will from supplications according to the hadith mentioned and others with similar meaning – and Allah knows best.

Asking for forgiveness means seeking protection from the evil consequences of one's bad deeds and asking that they be concealed.

The best method of asking for Allah's forgiveness is to begin with acknowledgement of Allah's greatness and giving praise. Then, one should admit to his sins and finally, ask Allah for his forgiveness. This is similar to what was narrated by Shaddad ibn Aus from the Prophet who said: "**The best of seeking forgiveness is for the slave to say: O Allah you are my Lord and there is no deity but You. You created me and I am your slave. I am upon your covenant and your promise as much as I am able. I seek refuge in you from any evil I have committed. I turn back to you because of your many favors upon me and I turn back to you with my sin. So forgive me. No one forgives sins but you."** Reported by Bukhari.(4)

Another type of asking forgiveness is for the slave to say: "**I seek forgiveness from Allah, other than whom there is no deity, the living, the maintainer, and I turn to him in repentance."** About this, it is reported that the Prophet said: "**Whoever said this will have his sins forgiven, even if he had deserted in the heat of battle."** Reported by Abu Daud and At-Tirmidhi.(5)

In *Sahih Al-Bukhari* from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet who said: "**By Allah, I seek Allah's forgiveness and repent to him – in each day – more than seventy times.**" (6)

And, in *Sahih Muslim,* from the narration of Al-Agharr Al-Musani from the Prophet who said: "**Things can be obscured from my heart, and so I seek Allah's forgiveness one hundred times a day.**"(7)

(4) Bukhari #6306

(5) Abu Daud #1517, At-Tirmidhi #3577. At-Tirmidhi said: It's chain is connected and sound.

(6) Bukhari #6307

(7) Muslim #2702

[Divider]

Third (of three causes of Allah's forgiveness): Monotheism:

This is the greatest and most important cause. Whoever loses this loses forgiveness, while whoever retains it has brought the greatest of all causes of Allah's forgiveness to the table!

So, whoever maintains true monotheism, but comes before Allah with nearly enough sins to fill the earth is met by Allah with enough forgiveness to nearly fill the earth. This is, however, conditional on Allah's will – if He wishes He will forgive this person but if He wishes, He may hold him responsible for his transgressions. But in the end, a pure monotheist will never end up in the fire permanently. He will eventually be released from it and admitted to Paradise.

This concludes the hadith mentioned by the author (An-Nawawi) in his original collection of hadith. We will now – with Allah's permission and assistance – mention additional hadith up to a total of fifty. These will be – like the original 42 collected by the author, universal hadith which combine all sorts of knowledge, wisdom and etiquettes – may Allah grant us success to present what is correct.

Hadith Number 43

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From the narration of Ibn Abbas who said that Allah's Messenger said: "**Assign all the set shares to their rightful owners. Then, whatever is left after the assigned shares is for the closest male relative.**" Reported by Bukhari and Muslim.

This hadith clarifies how the inheritance shares mentioned by Allah are divided among the heirs. It explains that any remainder from the estate after all those shares have been distributed is then allocated to the closest male relative outside of the heirs. This was not explicitly laid out in the Qur'an itself. This helps to clarify how other family members, not specifically mentioned in the inheritance shares can inherit from the estate.

So, when this hadith is combined with the verses regarding inheritance in the Qur'an a complete system for knowing exactly how to divide the estate of the deceased – including those with prescribed shares and those with "what is left" shares.

Hadith Number 44

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From the narration of Aisha from the Prophet who said: "**Nursing makes forbidden the same as birth makes forbidden.**" Reported by Bukhari and Muslim.

The scholars are unanimous in the application of this hadith in general and that nursing causes prohibitions in the same way as blood relations.[1]

(1) TN: What this means in practice is, for example, if a mother wet nurses someone else's child, that child becomes like a brother or sister to her own children and all that is prohibited between brother and sister is likewise prohibited between them.

Hadith Number 45

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From the narration of Jabir, that he heard the Prophet say in the year of the conquest of Makka, and while he was in Makka: "**Allah and his Messenger have forbidden the sale of alcoholic beverages, dead animals, pigs and statues. It was said: O Messenger of Allah, what about the fats from dead animals? It can be used for waterproofing boats, treating hides or used by people as lamp fuel to provide light. The Prophet answered: No. It is prohibited.**

Then Allah's Messenger said: Allah fought the Jews. He forbid them these fats so they rendered them (to oil) then sold them and consumed the proceeds!" Bukhari and Muslim

This hadith was also reported by Abu Daud from the narration of ibn Abbas from the Prophet and contains the addition: "**…and whenever Allah prohibits the consumption of anything, the consumption of proceeds of its sale is also prohibited to them.**"[1]

And in the two books of *Sahih* from the narration of Abu Huraira from the Prophet who said: "**Allah fought some of the Jews – he prohibited them those fats but they sold them and consumed the proceeds.**"[2]

(1) Abu Daud #3488. Also reported by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad 1/247. Ahmad Shakir said in his annotation to the Musnad (4/48): It's chain is sound (sahih).

(2) Bukhari #2224, Muslim #1582

Also in the two books of *Sahih* from the narration of Aisha who said: "When the verses from the end of Al-Baqarah were sent down, Allah's Messenger went out and was reciting them to the people. Then, he prohibited them doing business in alcohol." In another version reported by Muslim: "When the verses from the end of Al-Baqarah regarding interest were sent down, Allah's Messenger went to the masjid and announced the prohibition of doing business in alcohol."[3]

Muslim reported from the narration of Abu Saeed from the Prophet who said: "**Allah has prohibited alcohol. So, whoever receives news of this verse while in possession of any must neither drink it nor sell it.**" So, people came to the streets all over Madinah and spill out whatever they had.[4]

Muslim also reported from the narration of Ibn Abbas that a man gifted the Prophet a container of wine whereupon he said to him: "**Did you know that Allah has prohibited it?**" He said: "No." Then, he whispered something to another man. The Prophet asked him: "**What did you whisper to him?**" He said: "I requested him to sell it." The Prophet said: "**Anything the drinking of which is prohibited, the proceeds of its sale are also prohibited.**" And so the man opened the container and spilled its contents.[5]

[Divider]

So what we see in all of these hadith is that anything for which Allah has forbidden its use or consumption, then it is also forbidden to sell it and consume the proceeds, as was stated explicitly in the statement of the Prophet mentioned earlier: "**...and whenever Allah prohibits the consumption of anything, the consumption of proceeds of its sale is also prohibited to them.**" This is in fact a very general principle and applies to any and all things which it is prohibited to eat, drink, consume or otherwise benefit from.

(3) Bukhari #459, Muslim #1580

(4) Muslim #1578

(5) Muslim #1579

Hadith Number 46

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From the narration of Abu Burda from his father (Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari) who said: "The Prophet sent him to Yemen, so he asked him about some beverages which were made there. The Prophet said: '**What are they?**" He replied that they are called *al-bit'* and *al-mizr*. It was said to him: And what are those? He said that the first one is fermented from honey and the second is fermented from wheat. The Prophet said to him: "**Every intoxicant is prohibited.**" Bukhari

This hadith is foundational in the prohibition of every intoxicant which clouds the mind. Know, too, that intoxicants which cloud the mind are of two types:

First: That which contains a high element of pleasure. This then is the "intoxicant," the drinking of which is prohibited. A group among the scholars said: "It is the same whether such intoxicant is solid or liquid, eaten or drunk, and whether it is made from grain, fruit, milk, or anything else. And they included in this category the hashish made from marijuana and anything else which is consumed for the purpose of its pleasure and its intoxication.

In the *sunan* of Abu Daud from the narration of Shahr ibn Haushab from Umm Salama who said: "The Prophet prohibited every intoxicant and narcotic."[1] The word translated as "narcotic" (المفتر) means anything which in-

(1) This hadith is reported by Abu Daud #3686 (and also by Al-Baihaqiy) but was rated weak (dhaeef) by Sh. Al-Albaaniy in Dhaeef Sunan Abi Daud #793.

duces lack of drive, movement or ambition and induces laziness. Another harmful effect to be sure, but quite different from the intoxication of alcohol.

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Second: Things which can cloud the mind and "intoxicate," but which have no real pleasure such as henbane and the like. Our colleagues said: Using such things for medicinal purposes, when it has been found to be generally safe, is lawful. But most of our colleagues such as Al-Qadhi and the author of *Al-Mughni* said all such are prohibited because they cloud the mind with no need to do so, so they are prohibited the same as drinking alcohol.

As for the prescribed punishment, it applies only to substances which induce drunkenness, acting out and euphoria among the intoxicants. That's because these attributes are what attracts people to them such that there is a need for a punishment sufficient to deter this behavior.

As for substances which may cloud the mind but in which there is no euphoria or drunkenness, only lesser discretionary punishments may be used in these cases. This is because they do not have such a strong attraction for people such that they need the higher magnitude of punishment to deter people.

Hadith Number 47

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From the narration of Al-Ma'diykarib who said: "I heard Allah's Messenger say: '**No son of Adam has ever filled any vessel worse than his own stomach. A few morsels of food suffice any son of Adam to keep his back straight. But if he must (eat more) and there is no way out of it, then [limit it to] one third [of his stomach] for food, one third for drink and the remaining third for his breath.**'"

Reported by Imam Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasaa'I and Ibn Majah. At-Tirmidhi said: A good (*hassan*) hadith.

This hadith is the foundation for all of medicine.

It has been reported that Ibn Masuwai – the doctor – said when he read this hadith in the book of Abu Khaithama he said: "If only the people applied these words, they would be saved from diseases and disorders and the clinics and pharmacies would go out of business!" He said this because the root of all illness is dyspepsia (illness from overeating). This was something people used to say and it has also been narrated and attributed to the Prophet, but this attribution has not been authenticated. Al-Harith ibn Kalda – known as the physician of the Arabs – said "Diet is the king of medicines and the stomach is the king of illnesses." This, too, has been attributed to the Prophet, but that is not authenticated either.

These are some of the benefits to the body and to general health of keeping ones food consumption low and refraining from filling oneself with food.

It also has benefits for the heart and its spiritual state. Eating less food brings about sensitivity of the heart, strength of understanding, conquering of destructive desires and the weakening of impulsiveness and anger. Eating too much brings on the opposite of each and every one of those.

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Ibn Abu Ad-Dunya narrated in his book *Al-Ju'* ("Hunger") with his own chain of narration from Muhammad ibn Waasi' who said: "Whoever reduces his food understands and helps others understand. He gains clarity and precision. Eating too much weighs down the one who does it and holds him back from much that he wishes to achieve."

Uthman ibn Za'ida said: Sufyan Ath-Thawri wrote the following to me: "If you wish for your body to be healthy and for your need for sleep to be reduced, then reduce how much you eat."

Malik ibn Dinar said: "It is not appropriate to a believer for his belly to be his biggest ambition nor for his desires to be the sole thing that drives him."

[Divider]

The Prophet himself also encouraged keeping food consumption low in this hadith, saying: "**A few morsels of food suffice any son of Adam to keep his back straight**". So, the best way for a believer to eat is to fill only one third of his stomach with food, drink to fill the second third and leave the last third empty. Even drinking too much brings on drowsiness and interferes with good digestion.

The Prophet and his companions used be hungry a lot. They kept eating to a minimum. One could say that this was only because of the scarcity of food, but Allah can never choose for his Messenger anything but the best and most fitting environment.

In *Sahih Muslim* from the narration of Aisha who said: “Allah’s Messenger never ate his fill of bread made from wheat two days in a row until he died.”[1]

Also in *Sahih Muslim* from the narration of Umar that he once gave a sermon and mentioned the worldly hardship which had befallen the people and said: “I have seen Allah’s Messenger showing signs of hunger through the day without even finding the lowest grade of date with which to fill his stomach.”[2]

(1) Muslim #2970

(2) Muslim #2978

Hadith Number 48

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From the narration of Abullah ibn ‘Amr from the Prophet who said: **“There are four attributes which, if anyone possess them, they are a hypocrite (hidden disbeliever). And if anyone has a portion of them, he has a portion of hypocrisy until he leaves it: When he speaks he lies, when he promises he breaks his promise, when he disputes he transgresses and when he enters a covenant or treaty he is treacherous.”** Bukhari and Muslim

The word translated here as “hypocrisy” (النفاق) has been interpreted by the best of the scholars to have the linguistic meaning of the general category of deception and scheming along with displaying what appears good while holding its opposite within. In the terminology of Islam, it is of two types:

First: Major Hypocrisy. This means that one maintains the outward appearance of one who truly believes in Allah, his angels, his books, his messengers and the last day, but conceals within the opposite of all of that or of some of it. This is the “hypocrite” who was found in the time of the Prophet and who Allah condemned in the Qur’an. He informed us that in fact that they are rejecters of faith and that their destination is the deepest pits of hell-fire.

Second: Minor Hypocrisy. This is hypocrisy of actions (as opposed to hypocrisy of faith). It means that one maintains and outward appearance of good and righteous behavior, but conceals the opposite of that within.

The root of this second type derives from the attributes mentioned in this hadith.(1) Here, they are five:

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First: He speaks to one who believes what he is saying, but he is lying.

Second: When he promises, he breaks his promise. This is of two types. The first type is when even as he is promising he has no intention of keeping his promise and this is the most evil form of breaking a promise. The second type is when he intends, at the time of making the promise, to fulfill his promise, but later decides not to honor his promise without any excuse for not doing so.

Third: When he disputes he transgresses. The meaning of "transgresses" here is that he departs from what is true intentionally attempting to make truth falsehood and falsehood truth. So, if he is a person with the power in argument to be victorious for falsehood – and it appears to those listening that it is truth, this is one of the ugliest sins and one of the worst attributes of hypocrisy.

Fourth: When he enters a covenant or treaty he is treacherous and does not fulfill what he committed to.

Fifth: Betraying of trusts. When anyone is entrusted something, there is a clear obligation to return what he was entrusted with. Betraying of trusts is one of the attributes of hypocrisy.

(1) An additional hadith in both Muslim and Bukhari and narrated by Abu Huraira adds: "And when he is entrusted, he betrays his trust."

The bottom line is that the entire concept of "hypocrisy" goes back to a discrepancy between outward appearances and inner reality.

This is why the Companions feared for themselves that they may be afflicted with it without knowing. This is why Umar frequently asked Hudhaifa about his own position.(2)

Abu Rajaa Al-'Utaaridy was asked: "Of the Companions you met, did any of them fear for themselves regarding hypocrisy?" He answered: "Yes. I met – may Allah be praised – many of the righteous forebears. Yes, very much so, very much so."

Al-Bukhari said in his *Sahih*: Ibn Abu Mulaika said: "I encountered thirty of the companions of the Prophet and every one of them feared for themselves regarding hypocrisy." And it is reported that Al-Hassan (Al-Basry) said (about hypocrisy): "No one fears it but a Muslim and no one feels safe from it but a hypocrite."(3)

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There are a large number of narrations from the first generations on this matter.

Imam Ahmad was asked: "What do you say about one who does not fear for himself regarding hypocrisy?" He answered: "And who doesn't fear for himself regarding hypocrisy?"

(2) TN: The back story here is that Allah had revealed the identities of all the hypocrites among the Muslims to his Prophet. The Prophet in turn had disclosed the entire list to Hudhaifa but had sworn him to secrecy. Because of this oath, Umar could not ask him openly if he was on the list but used to ask Hudhaifa, "Do you see any signs of hypocrisy in me?" out of fear of this.

(3) From Kitab Al-Iman, in the chapter: The believer's fear lest his actions be nullified without his knowledge.

One of the worst forms of hypocrisy of application (Minor Hypocrisy) is for someone to do a deed, giving the appearance that his intentions are good, while in fact he is only doing this deed to achieve some evil purpose that he is concealing. Then, when he succeeds and achieves his evil goal by means of this deception, he is joyful with his scheme and his successful deception. The people praise him for what is apparent, while he achieves his evil intention, which he kept hidden.

Allah has described this very thing with regard to the hypocrites and the Jews:

About the hypocrites, Allah said: {…They established their masjid only to inflict harm, out of rejection [of faith], to divide the believers and provide a way in for those who had waged war against Allah and his Messenger since before. But they will swear: We had only the best of intentions. Allah bears witness that they are liars.} At-Tauba (9): 107. Regarding the Jews, Allah said: {Do not deem those who rejoice with what they have been given and who love to be praised with what they never did. Do not imagine that they are safe from the punishment. Theirs is a painful punishment.} Al 'Imran (3): 188

Once the Companions understood that the essence of hypocrisy is discrepancy between one's outward appearance and their inner reality, many of them feared for themselves. For example, if there was any change in their focus, clarity, and fear when hearing reminders or admonitions, perhaps by thoughts returning to worldly matters or thoughts about their family or their property – they feared that this may be an element of hypocrisy within them. This is like what was narrated in *Sahih Muslim* from the narration of Handhala Al-Usayyidiy who said: "I passed by Abu Bakr while I was crying." Abu Bakr said: "What's wrong?" I said: "Handhala has become a hypocrite! We are with Allah's Messenger and he reminds us about Paradise and Hell and it is if we see all that before our eyes. But then when we leave his presence to tend to our wives and our land and we forget much!" Abu Bakr said: "By Allah, we are the same." So, the two of them went to see Allah's Messenger who said: "**What's wrong, Handhala?**" He said: "Handhala has

become a hypocrite!" And then he proceeded to say the same things he had said to Abu Bakr. The Prophet said: "**If you were to remain in the state you are in when you rise from our sessions, the angels would come down to shake your hand wherever you sit and on your way! But, dear Handhala, there is a time [for this] and a time [for that].**"[4]

(4) Muslim #2750



Hadith Number 49

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From the narration of Umar ibn Al-Khattab, from the Prophet, who said: **“If you truly placed your reliance on Allah as it should be, you would receive your sustenance like the birds – they go out in the morning empty and return in the evening with full bellies.”**

This was reported by Imam Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasaa’I, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih* and Al-Hakim.

At-Tirmidhi said: “A good, sound hadith.”

This is a fundamental hadith on the subject of *tawakkul*, which means placing one’s reliance fully on Allah, Most High. It points out that true reliance on Allah brings about fulfillment of one’s needs and solutions to one’s problems in this life. Allah said: {…so whoever diligently fears Allah, he will provide for him a way out. * And provide his sustenance from unexpected directions. And for the one who truly relies on Allah, He suffices him.} At-Talaq (65): 1-2

The essence of reliance on Allah is true reliance of the heart on Allah for the bringing of needed benefits and preventing of harm in affairs of both this world and the next, and counting on Allah to provide all of that. Part of complete faith is understanding that no one other than Allah can give, or withhold, or help, or harm, except Allah.

Said ibn Jubair said: "Reliance [on Allah] is the sum total of faith."

Wahb ibn Munabbih said: "The ultimate goal is *tawakkul* (complete reliance on Allah)."

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Al-Hassan said: "Reliance of the slave on his Lord is for him to be certain that Allah is what he can trust."

[Divider]

It is important to note that reliance on Allah does not in any way negate working and seeking the means to one's needs. Allah has connected such causes to their effects and established these patterns in the lives of His creation. So Allah's orders includes working and seeking the means to fulfill our needs and at the same time they include placing one's reliance fully on Him. So, working to fulfill one's needs via its causes with one's body is part of what Allah orders us to do, just as relying fully and exclusively on Allah with our hearts is also part of what Allah commands, as Allah said: {O you who believe, take your appropriate precautions…} An-Nisaa (4): 71. And, He said: {And prepare against them (those who fight you) all strength and ranks of horses that you are able…} Al-Anfal (6): 60

Know also that the fruit of reliance on Allah is the tranquility of complete acceptance of whatever Allah decrees. So whoever consigns all of their concerns to Allah and remains in complete acceptance of whatever Allah chooses and decrees for him has achieved the true state of *tawakkul*.

For this reason, Al-Hassan, Al-Fudhail and others used to interpret the meaning of reliance on Allah as "acceptance" (رضا).

Hadith Number 50

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From the narration of Abdullah ibn Busr who said: “A man came to the Prophet and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, the many details of Islam are a lot for us, so can you give us something simple that we can hold onto?’ The Prophet said: “**That your tongue be always moist from mentioning Allah.**”

Reported by Imam Ahmad with this wording.

Allah has ordered the believers to mention (and remember) Him frequently, and He praised those who do that. Allah said: {O you who believe, mention Allah frequently and much. * And exalt Him morning and evening.} Al-Ahzaab (33): 41-42. And, he said: {And mention Allah much that you may be successful.} Al-Jumu’a (62): 10

In *Sahih Muslim,* from the narration of Abu Huraira, that the Prophet: Passed by a mountain called Jumdaan and said: “**Forward! This is Jumdaan. The devoted have come first.**” They asked him: “And who are the devoted?” “**Those men and women who remember and mention Allah much**.”

Of a similar meaning is the statement of Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz on the night of Arafat as he was approaching the destination: “He who comes first today is not the one whose camel reaches first. Rather, he is the one whose sins are forgiven.”

In *Sahih Muslim,* from the narration of Aisha who said: "Allah's Messenger used to mention Allah all the time."[1]

Al-Hassan said: "The most beloved slaves to Allah are those who remember/mention Him the most."

Ka'b said: "Whoever mentions Allah much is protected from hypocrisy." This meaning is attested to by the fact that Allah described the hypocrites as those who do not mention Allah except rarely. So, whoever mentions Allah a lot has distanced himself from this attribute of the hypocrites. For this reason, the chapter in the Qur'an which took its name from the "hypocrites" ends with an order to remember/mention Allah and for the believer to not allow things like wealth and family distract him/her from that. Whoever allows such things to divert them from remembering Allah is among the losers.

Ar-Rabee' ibn Anas said, narrating from some of the Companions: "The sign of love for Allah is a lot of mentioning Him. It is always the case that if you love something, you mention it a lot."

This reminds of Aisha's statement: "Allah's Messenger used to mention Allah all the time."

The meaning here is: when he was standing, walking, sitting or lying down – and whether he was in a state of ablution (for formal worship) or not.

Khalid ibn Mi'daan used to exalt Allah (i.e., saying *subhana Allah*) forty thousand times every day – aside from the amount of Qur'an he would recite in each day. When he died and they placed him on the platform for washing, his finger began to move in a pointing motion – indicating that he was exalting Allah!

(1) Muslim #373

It was said to Umair ibn Hani': "We never see your tongue stop moving. How many times to you exalt Allah in a day?" He said: "One hundred thousand unless I make a mistake with my fingers. That means that he counted all of those with his fingers."

Some people slept in the house of Ibrahim ibn Adham. One of them said: "Every time I woke during the night, I found him mentioning Allah. So I felt sad for myself. Then, I comforted myself with this verse: {That is Allah's favor [which] He grants to whomever He wishes.}" Al-Ma'idah (5): 54

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As knowledge and awareness increases, remembering and mentioning Allah flows from the believer without effort. This is why the people of Paradise will exalt Allah naturally, just as they breathe without conscious effort. Saying, "There is no deity but Allah" will be for them like drinking cool water is for the people of this world.

One of the seven groups who will be granted shade in the shadow of Allah's throne, on the day when there is no shade to be found except that, is: **"...a man who remembered Allah when alone and his eyes flowed with tears."**

Mentioning Allah is pure sweetness in the heart of the knowers. Allah said: {Those who believe and their hearts have peace by mentioning Allah. Is it not remembering Allah which brings peace to the hearts?} Ar-Ra'd (13): 28.

Malik bin Dinar said: "No one has ever experienced sweetness that can compare to mentioning Allah."



Prescribed Remembrance of Allah in the Day and in the Night

It is well known that Allah mandated that the Muslims will remember/ mention him five times in every day – during the five obligatory prayers in their respective time periods. He also gave us – aside from these five times – other opportunities to remember Him which are beyond the minimum requirement. First, He gave us the extra prayers which are connected to the five obligatory prayers, before, after or both. So, this is in addition to the required five prayers. If there is any shortcoming in the obligatory prayer such as lack of focus or distraction, these extra prayers fill any such gap. If not, then they are an additional good deed for the one who does them.

The longest times between the obligatory prayers are between the night prayer and the dawn prayer and then between the dawn prayer and the noon prayer. So, Allah gave us additional, optional prayers during these periods lest we be absent from remembering Allah for so long. So, between the night prayer and the dawn prayer, there is *witr* and *qiyaam al-lail*, also known as *tahajjud*. And, between the dawn prayer and the noon prayer there is an optional prayer (after the sun is up or about mid-morning) called *dhuhaa*.

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As for remembering Allah with your heart and mentioning him with your tongue, this is endorsed in Islam at all times, especially so at certain times. One of the most recommended times for that is when sitting after performing one of the five obligatory prayers.

It is also highly liked to mention Allah after the two prayers which have no attached *Sunnah* prayer after them: the dawn prayer and the afternoon prayer. So, it is an established and recommended practice in Islam to mention Allah following the dawn prayer until the sun comes up and after the afternoon prayer until the sun sets and these are the two best times for remembering Allah. {And exalt him morning and evening.} Al-Ahzaab (33): 42

When you go to bed, it is much liked that you not sleep except in a state of ritual purity (as for prayer) and mentioning Allah. So, you say *subhana Allah, al-hamdu lillahi* and *Allahu akbar* for a total of one hundred times, as the Prophet taught Fatimah and Ali to do before falling asleep. Then, you should do whatever you can in terms of prayers or supplications established by the Prophet at the time of sleeping. There are many types of such established prayers at this time. Some are recited verses from the Qur'an or other forms of mentioning, praising, beseeching and exalting Allah. Later, if one wakes up during the night, turning over on his bed, he should mention Allah every time that happens.

In *Sahih Al-Bukhari* from the narration of Ubada from the Prophet who said: "**Whoever wakes in the night and said: (There is no deity but Allah, alone and with no partner. His is all sovereignty and all praise is his. He is in complete control of all things. Exalted is Allah and praise to Allah and there is no deity but Allah and Allah is greatest. There is no power nor any transformation except by Allah.) And then he said: (O Allah, forgive me) – or made another supplication – his plea will be answered. If he then gets up, performs ablution and prays, his prayer will be accepted.**"[1]

When the Prophet would wake up in the night, he used to say: "**Praise is to Allah who brought me back to life after my death and unto him is the resurrection.**"[2]

(1) Bukhari #1154

(2) Bukhari #6325, Muslim #2711, narrated by Al-Barraa'

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Then, when you stand for *tahajjud* you should do all that has been narrated from the Prophet. Close out your night prayer with seeking forgiveness in the wee hours of the night as Allah has praised those who seek forgiveness at that time. Then, when the dawn prayer arrives, pray the two *rakaat* which go before the dawn prayer, then pray the dawn prayer, and following that, remain in the remembrance and mentioning of Allah until sunrise.

It is necessary to repent to Allah and seek forgiveness for any misdeeds we may have done – large or small – as Allah said: {Those who, when they have done something wicked or wronged themselves, remember Allah and ask his forgiveness.) Al 'Imran (3): 135

Clearly, if one were to maintain all of these additional practices, his tongue would indeed be continuously moist with the mention of Allah in all of his states and conditions!

Abridgment of

the Compendium

of Ologies and Aphorisms

Mukhtasar Jami' Al Uloom Wal Hikam

Imam Ibn Rajab Al Hanbali

This is an abridgement of Jaami' Al-'Uloom wa Al-Hikam by the great imam Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali, may Allah have mercy on him. Jaami' Al-'Uloom wa Al-Hikam is the greatest explanatory commentary of the "Forty Hadith" by Imam An-Nawawi and the most profound. For this reason, the scholars attached great importance to it and considered it a valuable reference for the detailed explanation of those noble hadith which define the fundamentals of Islam.

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